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© Adam Campbell/ktmimages.com

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© Sully

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COMMENT

New Year's resolutions are all well and good but it's generally much more fun breaking them than it is making them. Happily, I'm now 35 days nicotine free – but just 19 days into my boozeless January I found myself banging elbows at the bar as me and a couple of buddies smashed back stupidly strong ciders complimented delightfully by flaming sambuca chasers. Class! Not only had I fallen off the wagon, the next morning – once I managed to peel my face off the pillow – it felt as though I'd been run over by the bugger as well.

Anyway, January's generally a joyless month – the whole festive party's over, tumbleweed's blowing though my bank account and the short days mean the only time I see daylight during the week is at work – so lasting so long into 2010 without giving my liver a good workout is a result.

I'm not the biggest fan of our UK version of supercross so for the last couple of years the main dangling carrot to get me through January has been the promise of Steve Ireland's 'The Tough One'. But – horrors of horrors – this year Steve was forced to postpone his annual extreme enduro when the weather turned out to be too extreme for the 1000s of fans who turn out every year to watch the world's leading X-Men bouncing bikes and bodies off Nantmawr Quarry.

Still, the good news is that January is now just a memory, February is unfurling before our very eyes and in the space of eight short days we've got the twin treats of a rescheduled T1 (February 20) and the opening round of the Maxxis British MX champs at Little Silver. Then in successive weekends there's the Hawkstone International MX, the first round of the Red Bull Pro Nationals at Foxhill and then round two of the Maxxis at Mallory. Feast or famine...

These are exciting times for off-road sport – both on a domestic level and worldwide – and this month's DBR touches on a couple of areas where big changes are on the horizon. For years unchallenged as the UK's premier MX series, the Maxxis-sponsored ACU series could be accused of resting on its laurels. And suddenly there's some serious competition in the shape of the Red Bull Pro Nationals which have taken a much more innovative approach to what is, after all, hardly an original concept – that of people racing motorcycles around an off-road course.

In response to the challenge posed by the RBPNS the Maxxis series has undergone a serious shake-up with a new three 20-minute moto format offering fans more bang for their buck. And with a successful debut season under their belts the MCF are weighing in with a championship spread over nine two-day rounds all featuring pro, youth and two-stroke racing.

So is it war? To be honest I'm not entirely sure. As long as riders can compete in both series and aren't forced to choose between the two then I guess there's an argument that the Maxxis champs and Red Bull Pro Nats will actually compliment each other. And if they force each other to constantly raise the bar then it's us – the fans – who are in a win-win situation.

On the global stage things aren't potentially quite so chummy. Whether you like him or loathe him, Giuseppe Luongo and his Youthstream organisation certainly get things done – and certainly aren't afraid to court controversy or think outside the box. The UK economy may have miraculously popped up out of recession but the full effects of the global economic crisis are going to be bouncing around for a good few years to come and, ultimately, things may never be the same again.

So if you were running a successful world motorcycle championship and staring down the barrel of greatly reduced budgets from the factories that help finance the whole shooting match what would you do? How about delay the start of your season (2011) to coincide with the end of the AMA indoor season and try and tempt some US-bound outdoor spend across into the GPs? And on the flip side, it also means that GP teams will be free to have a crack at the SX big-time too...

Should the Japanese factories decide to point their racing budgets in one direction rather than continue to divide them between Europe and America then we're facing the biggest shake up in global motocross in the history of the sport.

Like I said, exciting times...

Sean



Ryan Dungey's come out swingin' in supercross



Mighty Max (left) and Tommy Searle are keeping the British end up



Stewart's SX season is over



© A. Campbell

NEWSH UND!

A DIRTY DELIVERY OF OFF-ROAD NEWS AND NONSENSE SERVED UP FROM THE MESSY DESK OF OUR DEPUTY DAWGINATOR

With feck all in the way of major races happening in Europe over the winter (bar the FWSX series that saw Canada's Colton Facciotti and coffin dodgin' Gordon Crockard take the major titles) most of the MX world's focus has been squarely aimed at the West Coast of America where the AMA SX series is currently being scrapped out by some of the world's finest dirt bike racers.

The anticipated battle between reigning champ James Stewart and his long-term rival Chad Reed failed to materialise as both title contenders are currently sidelined with injury. It's originally thought that the Thunder from Down Under was first to break as he bust his hand in a Phoenix Main Event collision with Bubba that saw both riders hit the dirt.

What was unknown at the time was that Stewart was already riding with an undiagnosed scaphoid break that he'd injured in that horrendous heat race incident with Kyle Partridge that you can watch online at dirtbikerider.com. James actually went on to finish that race 15th and then third at Anaheim 2 one week later before an MRI scan confirmed the champ's wrist was more badly hurt than originally thought.

With both the main championship contenders out of action Suzuki's Supercross class rookie Ryan Dungey is romping away with the championship lead with two race wins, a second and a fourth in the four rounds currently already held. Bubba's

team-mate Josh Hill sits second in points while Ryan Villopoto – who wins round four in San Francisco – is third some 13 points back of Dungey. The history books show us that out of this year's crop of supercross talent only Stewart and Reed have won titles before so whoever is crowned king in Vegas in four months time will be claiming the title for the very first time – exciting times are ahead for sure.

There's plenty of excitement in the West Coast Lites class too as Englishmen Max Anstie and Tommy 'Gun' Searle make their supercross debuts at Anaheim. Amazingly, Anstie almost holeshots his first ever heat race – and goes on to finish second behind his team-mate Broc 'The Tickler' Tickle – while Searle also qualifies for the Main Event with ease. Both Brits finish the 15-lap Main in the top 10 with Searle scoring seventh and Max a solid ninth.

Round two in Phoenix sees another pair of solid rides from the Britpack battlers with this month's cover star Searle coming home eighth while Anstie scrapes to 15th. However, at practice for round three Tommy injures his shoulder and sits out the next two races to relinquish his top 10 standing in the series. Anstie's good form continues with a seventh at A2 being backed up with an eighth in San Fran. The 16-year-old Star Racing Yamaha star sits eighth in the series standings – currently lead by Jake Weimer – sandwiched between pre-season favourites Josh Hansen and Ryan Morais.



Stefan Everts has played a big part in developing KTM's 350

KTM's all-new 125 broke cover in Spain – this thing is so hush-hush KTM UK didn't even know about it



It's not! It is! It's not! It is! It's not! It is! It's not! It is! It's not!

Also in America, Charles County Sheriff's Department are asking 'have you seen this man?' Apparently the artist's impression above is of a dastardly outlaw who recently robbed the Old Line Bank in Waldorf and 'got away with the loot'. Now I'm not the kind of folk who likes to cast aspersions but to me it looks like J-Law might not be the only former dirt biking champ who likes to roll in a less than legal manner. Not that I want to Dobb him in or anything...

On the subject of former 125cc world champions caught in action it was nice to see Stefan Everts putting in some laps at the Onda Municipal MX circuit in Spain recently. The 10-time world champ and winner of 101 GPs looked right at home riding KTM's new 350cc four-stroke and wasn't far off the pace of the Red Bull-sponsored team's factory riders.

A pre-production 350cc machine was also spotted being ridden in Spain along with an all-new 125cc two-stroke complete with an all-new frame and plastics. While the Austrian technicians kept the bike well hidden off the track there was no disguising it on the sandy circuit where it looked to be a top performing piece of kit. Remember, you saw it here first!

It's uncertain at this point whether this will be the 2011 or 2012 model SX125 or if it will ever reach production at all – not even the guys at KTM UK had seen pictures of it until we showed them this

one. I guess we'll find out for sure in the upcoming months. It did seem however that it was being ridden for endurance – rather than performance – test purposes which would usually indicate that it's in the final stages of development so we could see this machine on showroom floors before the end of the 2010 race season.

After what seems like a longer than normal winter the race season finally kicks off this month with pre-season scraps in Mantova and Valencia happening in the run up to the start of the Maxxis British championships on February 28 at Little Silver in Devon. One week after the start of our official domestic title chase the Hawkstone International goes off at the infamously sandy Shropshire venue and this too should be a corker if the entry list is anything to go by.

The March 7 non-championship event is headlined by Red Bull KTM's Shaun Simpson who'll be making his first of not many UK appearances on home soil in 2010 and will be looking to dominate as he did last year. Also booked in are Teka Suzuki's Clement Desalle, Steve Ramon and Ken Roczen, factory CCM teamsters Stephen Sword and Tom Church, Red Bull KTM's Max Nagl, British MX1 champ Brad Anderson, CAS Honda's Gareth Swanepoel, crazy Dutchman Marc de Reuver, Californian bad boy Mike Alessi and the Beast from the Middle East (or East Midlands if you prefer) Neville Bradshaw!

The following weekend – March 13/14 – sees the Red Bull Pro Nationals kick off at Foxhill while the British Masters season starts at Mallory Park on the same weekend, then there's more Mallory Park action on March 21 as the second round of the Maxxis series visits the GP venue.

Before all of them though is the rescheduled Tough One that was snowed off from its original date in January. While the time has changed the venue remains the same with the awesome Nantmawr Quarry waiting patiently to wreck the dreams of the world's best extreme enduro riders and trash a machine or two! Tickets are still available at www.worevents.com and with a top notch entry of off-road stars including David Knight, Dougie Lampkin, Taddy Blazusiak and Geoff Walker you don't wanna miss out on this one! The new date for your diary is Saturday, February 20.

And finally, what's going on with the ACU's MMX series? In the year that it can finally become the MMX MMX championship – MMX is, of course, 2010 in Roman numerals – they go and change the name so it's now the MX323 championship instead. But why MX323? Well rather than being the British Open (formerly four-strokes) and U21 series the two main championships are now the British MX3 and U23s (in line with Youthstream's policy of making 24-year-olds and older ride fo-fiddys) which when put together makes MX323.

Pah – the world's gone crazy!





WIN!WIN!WIN!

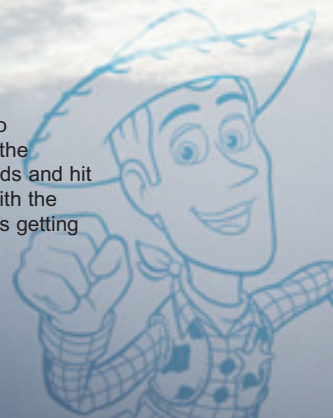
SHAUN SIMPSON'S FACTORY KATOOM KIT...

We've teamed up with factory Red Bull KTM star and all-round good guy Shaun Simpson to give DBR readers the chance to get their mitts on a gen-u-uine set of his 2010 Alpinestars kit.

So sought after is this prize that we had to get the green light from the CEO of Alpinestars himself before we could put his race jersey and jeans up for grabs – yet all you need to do to be in with a shout of getting the gear is tell us the name of the cowboy from Toy Story.

- Is it:**
- A:** Woody
 - B:** Buzz Lightyear
 - C:** Mr Potato Head
 - D:** Slinky Dog

Once you've decided on your answer hook up to www.dirtbikerider.com where you need to follow the competition link, type in your answer, fill out the fields and hit transmit. The comp closes at noon on **March 11** with the first correct entry chosen totally at random after this getting the jersey and jeans.





WHERE'S CYRIL?

FIND DESPRES AND WIN A SHARK LID

This month thanks to our bezzie mates at Nevis Marketing we've got another top-of-the-range **Shark SXR Cyril Despres** replica skid lid worth a whole **£229.99** to give away.

Somewhere within the pages of this very issue we've superimposed the Dakar Rally hero's disembodied noggin onto an innocent bystander. If you can spot it (and no, Einstein, not the one on this page) then you could win the helmet – simple, eh?

All you have to do is locate Cyril's swede and then text the word **DBRCYRIL** followed by a space, the page number, another space and then your name and postcode to **81800**. You'll receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.*

Entries close on **March 11** with the first correct entry chosen at random getting the Shark lid in a size of their choice...



GOLDENPAD

WIN A PAIR OF RENTHAL HANDLEBARS

Renthal, as everyone knows, builds champions – and now one lucky reader can have their very own piece of this winning heritage.

Have a close look at our pic of this golden Renthal bar pad, then flick through this month's mag and find the full pic we've taken it from. Once you've found it simply text the word **DBRRENT** followed by a space, the page number it appears on, another space and then your name and postcode to **81800**. You'll receive a text back confirming your entry to this competition.*

Entries close on **March 11** with the first correct entry chosen at random getting a pair of Renthal handlebars of their choice...

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THE REVEREND READY TO RACE!

JAKE'S BEEN BUSTING OUT THE LAPS IN FRANCE AND SPAIN AS HE GETS HIS TWO-FIDDY-EFF DIALLED IN FOR THE COMING SEASON...

Words by Jake Nicholls Photo by Suttly

One day I will learn to tape my hands from the get-go... Every year I get on the bike, get carried away and enjoy it so much I don't feel my hands gradually skinning themselves on the old Renthals while going around the track with the biggest inner smile you could ask for.

That's just what I did at Dunkirk the Friday before I flew to Spain – four 20-minute sessions later and I had two royal blood blisters on my left hand. I have a good excuse for getting them so bad on that hand though as I can't straighten my arm after breaking my elbow badly twice, forcing my hand to hold on at a bit of an angle. Such is life though and I would quite happily carry on riding bikes forever even if it did mean I got a manky hand every time I rode...

Anyway, hi everyone – hope you're all well and keeping your chins up and throttle hands twisted through this pants weather. As you can imagine I've been pretty busy since I last wrote. Everything's starting to kick off nicely now, January was pretty much a month of training for me. I managed to get out and do a bit of enduro in the snow which was fun, then once it thawed I rolled the 450 out a couple of times – second time I was really enjoying it and feeling myself but then I crashed round a fast sweeping left turn.

The front end went away from me so I was going to land on my left elbow, I tried to jump of the back of the bike and land on my ass but the bike fell over faster than I expected and I dug my heel into the ground and twisted my knee. Also got the bars into the chest but luckily I was wearing good body armour and it dented that instead of me... Lesson learnt! So my knee was sore for a while, to be honest it's only just stopped aching and we're in February which is weird as it doesn't affect me riding or running or anything actually other than sleeping.

My flight to Spain was on Sunday morning and I wanted to get out on the 250 once before so I arranged with my new wrench – the main man Mr Wayne Banks – to ride at Dunkirk on Friday. We had a really successful day and I felt really good considering I hadn't rode the wee bike since Landrake. Then it was back to packing and off to Spain. Landed in Barcelona on Sunday, got picked up by Graeme and Pringle and off we went to the Everts camp. First day we rode on a real hardpack track and it had rained that morning so it was like a skid pan – third lap I went down on a fast sweeper. Kebab elbows all round but it wouldn't be riding in Spain without them!

Out of nine days there I rode seven so I've got a fair bit done and was feeling better each time. I feel fit on the bike – my arms have taken a while to get used to it but they're good now, my speed is getting there and the bike set-up is coming together. I have had a head start with the settings from last year but I'm working on them to make it even better. Wayne and I seem to be working well together, we get on well and he's a great guy as

well as a mechanic. I would say I'm quite an easy rider for a mechanic to have because I never moan about the bike, I just ride. Sometimes this doesn't help get settings but I just love to get out there and ride.

I've been riding with the factory KTM boys which has been good to gauge speed etc and to learn from those guys as they're all great riders. I'm confident I can really mix it up with those boys this year and I'm excited about it all. It's been cool to catch up with David Knight down here too, he's a good cat and we had a right laugh. Graeme and his mechanic Jeremy as well as Wayne and I have got a good little relationship and we have a good laugh together as well as working hard.

Rob Meek and his two sons Ben and Nathan Watson came down as they're the schoolboy riders for the team this year and they're really nice kids. I've known Rob for a while but not so much the kids and they're a great couple of lads with bright futures. I went karting with them one night which was awesome then the next day the wolf pack as Jeremy has named it (Wayne, Jeremy, Graeme and I) went back which ended in chaos but we had a ball and drove back to the hotel buzzing. On Sunday night we drove to Barcelona to watch Knighter in the endurocross as well as the trial world champs which was a great experience – thanks to David and Giz for getting us in too.

Knighter provided some good racing and made a mega move on Taddy which ended in him crashing but it was still a great night though. I've got to be honest and say the trials wasn't my cup of tea as it was a bit boring but absolutely amazing at the same time.

Suttly was over to do some photos and interviews too which was cool and he got some sweet shots as usual (Suttly sure does take a sweet shot – SL). We finished off at Everts' camp then hit the road last night to Murcia to Mr Crockard's set-up – got to the hotel at 1.30am. When I got up I couldn't believe the setting and surroundings – it's a cracking place and the hotel is immaculate. We had some breakfast and chatted with GC this morning, then went out for a run with Davey who's GC's friend and companion down here.

It's my day off but we had a fun little session as we ran down the beach doing running races and piggy back races etc, all in the sun I might add! After an hour Onion (Graeme) and I decided to jump in the sea and swim round to the marina where the truck was parked – 15 ball-shrinking minutes later we climbed out of the marina in our pants and were greeted by Davey being roasted on our behalf as no swimming's allowed in the marina.

That's about all now, back to business tomorrow then not long until the racing begins and who's cheated themselves during the off-season will be revealed!

Go hard #45



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HERO HENRY!

DOUG'S BACK IN THE SADDLE...

Photos by Brian Balsaitis/Shazamm/ESPN Images

Most kids of the '70s will remember those little egg-shaped Playskool toys that looked like rotund redneck folk and went by the name of Weebles. No matter what you did to these little barstools they just wouldn't fall down – you could rock 'em, sock 'em, throw 'em off a cliff or run yer mamma's Austin Allegro over them and they'd always pop back up with that trademark smile on their face. It's true what the adverts told us – 'Weebles wobble but they won't fall down'.

Born on September 6, 1969, in Milford, Connecticut, we can pretty much guarantee that three-time AMA motocross champ Doug Henry played with these toys as a child. And by my reckoning he learnt a lot from their never-give-up attitude as well because like a Weeble no matter what amount of trauma this great man puts himself through there's just no stopping him and he'll always succeed in getting back up – and in Doug's case that means on top.

After winning the 1993 and '94 AMA 125cc Nationals Henry moved up to the premier 250 class as Jeremy McGrath's factory Honda team-mate. Midway through that year's outdoor series Doug got a little bit of whisky throttle at the top of one of Budds Creek's many elevation changes and suffered one of the biggest racing crashes ever caught on camera. After jumping from a height of around 80 feet to flat ground Henry broke his back but miraculously suffered no paralysis.

Less than two years after that horrific crash Henry made history by winning the Las Vegas SX on a prototype YZM400 – the first time any rider had won a supercross Main Event on a four-stroke machine. Heading into the outdoor series on a high, cruel luck would strike again that summer as Doug would break both wrists in a crash at Budds Creek – once more he was down in the dirt but like a Weeble he came rebounding back to win the 250cc outdoor championship the very next year.

Following his retirement from full-time motocross Doug dabbled in snocross and supermoto racing taking X-Games gold in 2005 and a bronze medal the following year. Then Henry was rocked once more when, in March 2007, the heroic AMA Hall of Famer crashed in a supermoto practice session and suffered partial paralysis from the waist down.

But you can't keep a good man down and seeing as though Henry's regarded by many as one of the finest human beings on this planet it should come as no surprise that he's back winning X-Games medals – this time of the winter variety.

Racing in the Adaptive Snowmobile class on his now trademark #19 Yamaha, Doug battled through the pack after getting off to a poor start. Using all the grit and determination he could muster he pushed hard and only narrowly missed out on stealing second place as the chequered flag flew. Pumped to be racing again he had no complaints about the end result – even though many felt that with a better start he'd have dominated.

"The hardest thing today was the rough track which made it difficult for me," says Doug. "I was the only paraplegic in the event and so I was the only strapped in, sitting down and hammering through the bumps the whole way – to get a medal was awesome!"



CROCKSTAR

VIVA ESPAÑA!

GC'S JUST PICKED UP A NATIONAL SX TITLE AND NOW HE'S SUNNING HIMSELF IN SPAIN – NICE WORK IF YOU CAN GET IT...

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Suttty

Hola! I've had a great start to my year and I'm mega pumped at how things are working out for my Crockard Motocross Spain camps down in the region of Murcia. Today is rest day for the riders on the camp and this is important as they have a further 10 days ahead of them before heading back to the cold wet winter in the UK.

I've been extremely busy and very short on spare time to do some of the other aspects of my life – as usual I forget sometimes that I am not Superman and run myself into the ground trying to manage too many activities and I end up tired, stressed and sick. With the worst possible timing that is happening right now and you can imagine that I'm not best pleased that I've ran myself into the ground and picked up a heavy cold and raw throat. After the Liverpool SX is when I started to feel sick and two weeks later I still haven't got better. Not having a spleen can add to the difficulty of not being healthy so right now I just need to be a little careful I don't get any worse.

Besides that one problem everything else is going really great. I am now the new 2010 British SX champion and I also finished runner-up in the International Pro SX1 championship. So for sure I was very pleased to get those title results and repay the Paul Bird Motorsport Kawasaki team with the glory and pride of doing so. I'd like to continue with the team into motocross and supercross for the rest of this 2010 season so I have some meetings planned to try and put a structure together for this to happen.

In the meantime I can announce that Kawasaki UK have provided me with a KXF450 through Norman Watt Motorcycles to contest motocross this year on. I have that 450 with me in Spain and have been using it at my camps on the days that we ride. I think the bike is really good in stock trim. I will need to upgrade the springs on the suspension as I weigh 14 stone and I'm too heavy for the rate of the standard springs. After that I have an Akrapovic exhaust to test and use and I'd say that'll be all I'll need to modify from the standard set up.

I rode the KX250 two-stroke hybrid at the Liverpool and London supercross rounds. It is such a nice bike. Again I am looking at the options of racing it at some motocross this year and will have to get a few things in place first

before that comes off. PBM own the bike and our deal was only for the SX series but I hope we can make a deal to continue together into other events and championships.

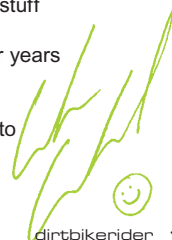
The KTM UK race team arrived with us at the camp last night and we will be out on the bikes tomorrow together getting prepared for the fast approaching season. Their team riders are Jake Nicholls, Graeme Irwin and Natalie Kane. We also have top British riders Elliott Banks Browne, Lewis Tombs and Scott Probert riding with us too.

It was Elliott's 20th birthday last night so we all went to a friend's outdoor go-kart circuit and had some races. It was floodlit and a pretty big track so the craic was mighty. With the mixed English and Irish nationalities in the camp I suggested we had a Kart des Nations race but instead we just went for the regular straight race. Lewis Tombs took the victory at the flag. Today we are having a game of beach soccer so that will be interesting to see if there is as much contact as there was at the karts!

I came out here to Spain a few weeks ago to arrange all the tracks that we would use for the camps and I happened to get a nice letter sent to me in Spanish by the Spanish government telling me that I had been captured on camera doing 140kph in a 100kph speed zone. They kindly even sent me a photograph of me sitting behind the wheel of the hire car doing the speeding crime – 200 Euros is the price they made me pay but I'm actually okay with that as if I hadn't been speeding then I definitely would have missed my flight and had to pay way more to sort out the resulting complications. The photo is quite funny and I might get it up as my profile picture on Facebook just for the banter.

Recently I have been surprised at how many people ask me if it is actually me that writes my DBR columns. Of course it's me is always my reply, I thought it was obvious that it had to be me who writes it. Maybe I'll have to get a bit more personal stuff into the content although that's something I've been avoiding for years as it can be a dodgy business when you write statements and opinions on paper for the world to read. Ask Mark Eastwood, he'll tell you.

Adios amigos...





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SWORDY

A DAY IN THE LIFE!

IT'S NOT ALL GLAMOUR BEING AN INTERNATIONAL SPORTING STAR – HELL NO, EVEN BRITISH CHAMPIONS NOD OFF ON THE SOFA...

Words by **Stephen Sword** Photo by **Sutty**

We are well into 2010 now and it's all systems go. The snow has finally gone but how bloody cold is it still? I've been out riding three to four days a week and managing to stay clear of the wet weather. All is going well regarding my riding and I'm enjoying being in the new team – I already knew everyone pretty well anyway so it's been easy to feel right at home.

On January 10 I hit the big three-zero! Yep, 30 years old! I must say I don't feel 30 and nor do I feel old but it's a fact that I'm the third oldest rider in GPs. I couldn't believe it when I found out but it's true – oh well, you can't buy experience. Jodie arranged a surprise birthday meal for me. I had no idea and it was a great surprise to see lots of people turn up – about 30 in total. She did well to arrange it and even better to keep it a secret from me – she's not the best at keeping secrets.

I am going to do something different this month! I've picked a day in the week to write about from the moment I wake up to the moment I go to bed. Here we go...

Alarm goes off at 7am. I've been in the spare room as Ayrton's poorly so he's been in with his mummy. I listen at the door to see if they are up, I can hear him so I go in and take him downstairs for his breakfast. The dogs are going mad as they are hungry too. I sit him in his high chair, flick the kettle on and feed the dogs. Jodie makes us coffee while I feed Ayrton his porridge and let the dogs out the back for the loo.

Once Ayrton's finished his porridge he goes in his walker and has a piece of toast – this gives me time to finish my coffee, have some breakfast, take my vitamins and for Jodie to go upstairs to have a shower and get ready. At 9am I head off for a cycle – it's not raining but freezing and the back roads that I cycle on are icy. Less than five minutes in I hit some black ice and nearly crash – my feet are starting to feel like ice cubes and I'm starting to wonder what the hell I'm doing! But about half-an-hour in I start to warm up and get into a groove.

I arrive back home at 11.07am. I get changed, grab a drink and a banana and head to the gym for a couple of hours. TC rings on

the way to arrange riding for the next day. I do my circuit, swim, have a shower and head home for some lunch. First I have to pick up some dry cleaning at the Co-op. Jodie's out with Ayrton getting some food shopping. I cook up a little pasta dish for us both, they arrive back and we eat at 1.45pm. Ayrton is grizzly and not happy – he's been poorly for a couple of days – so I stick him in the buggy and take him and the dogs out for a walk. He eventually falls asleep.

We get back at about 3.30pm – Jodie's been doing some cleaning, washing and preparing dinner. Ayrton wakes up a bit happier so I stick him in the walker and he starts to chase the dogs around which he thinks is funny but all they want to do is sleep after their long walk. I go to the garage and pack my van up with my riding kit ready for the next day as it's an early start. I sit down and play with Ayrton until I feed him his tea at 5pm. He's got his favourite – mash, veg and chops followed by vanilla custard. Jodie and I eat at 6pm – we've got the same as Ayrton.

Ayrton has a bath at 6.30pm which I always do when I'm here so we head up. He gets excited about having a bath. I get him ready for bed, mummy comes up, gives him a bottle and puts him to bed at 7pm. I head down, grab a Muller Rice from the fridge and put my feet up in front of the TV. We sit down and watch Eastenders but Ayrton starts screaming on the monitor so Jodie heads up to sort him out. He goes back to sleep after about 15 minutes.

At 9pm we watch Hustle on BBC1 – I fall asleep halfway through and pretend I know what's happening when Jodie asks me. I let the dogs out while Jodie makes us a drink before we head up to bed at 10.15pm. Ayrton wakes up so we spend 30 minutes getting him settled again. I do a little stretching and spend 20 minutes playing Ronnie O'Sullivan snooker on the iPhone before falling asleep.

Well I hope that wasn't too boring for you all but something a bit different. The coming weeks I have some testing with some new parts so that should be exciting and the end of February we have the first British at Little Silver. I can't wait for it all to start!

Stephen Sword
#1
dirtbikerider 21

SUNDAY, 7TH MARCH, 2010

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Picture by RICK BLYTH



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TOM CHURCH CLEMENT DESALLE LEWIS GREGORY ALEX SNOW JORDAN ROSE NATHAN PARKER MIKE KRAS BRAD ANDERSON STEPHEN SWORD JAMIE LEWIS MICHAEL HUGHES
RYAN POTTENGER BART CONEN TRISTAN ROWE STUART EDMONDS KARL SCHULZE STEVEN MCCAUGHEY JAMES LASSU PETER REDFORD MATT MORRIS MIKE ALESSI RYAN BLIZZARD
RAY ROWSON YENDEL MARTENS JASON DOUGAN ADAM REYNOLDS EVGENY BOBRYCHEV NOUD AERTS STUWEE REJNDERS...CONFIRMED SO FAR

MX2 RIDERS

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Q: Does it frustrate you that you seem to get overlooked by the bigger GP teams, even though you've proved you can run in the top 10 and now have the British MX1 title?

Karl Lane, Bristol

A: "I would love to have a ride on a good GP team – I've never had a factory bike, maybe that's all I would need. I think I could run in the top 10."

Q: How old were you when you started motocross and what got you into it?

Mike Lamb, Chippenham

A: "Since I was three years old I had a BMX and a motocross bike. I was BMX European champ at the age of seven then decided I liked motocross more so gave up the BMX and concentrated on the motocross bike."

Q: How disappointing was it to be picked for the des Nations team only to be robbed of the opportunity when you knackered your thumb?

Alex Hemmings, Penzance

A: "I was really disappointed when I did my thumb and I didn't think my thumb was as bad as it was first thought. I could of still made it but it wasn't fair on the team not being 100 per cent so I had to give someone else the chance. I just hope I do good again this year so I get picked again."

Q: Do you still break out the BMX during the week?

Dan Greene, Newport

A: "No but I have just bought an old one and I'm gonna do it up so I can get out on our local BMX track because it's good training."

Q: I'd love to see you campaign a full season of GPs – is that going to happen this season with the PAR squad?

Paul Turner, Cumbria

A: "No, I'm afraid not. I'm gonna try and do a few but the team hasn't got enough funds to do world championships, it costs a lot of money now. I would love to do them all but we're busy in England most weeks this year – I defo hope to do a couple though."

BRAD ANDERSON

A FORMER EUROPEAN BMX CHAMP AND NOW THE REIGNING BRITISH MX1 CHAMPION, BRAD ANDERSON'S A PRO ABOUT TO BE ON THE WRONG END OF A PROBING...

Interview by JP O'Connell Photo by Suttly

Q: Now that you finally have the British MX1 title, how difficult do you think it will be to hold on to and who do you think the main threats will be?

Tony Henderson, Blackpool

A: "I have been training hard in my local gym and I've been to America for four weeks riding every day so I'm hoping to keep hold of the red plate – I'm not gonna let it go easy after all the hard work I've put in over the years! Swanny I think will be up there this year, he will be wanting the red plate for sure!"

Q: Did the whole Swift Suzuki thing have much of a negative effect on you?

Martin Carnell, Worcester

A: "Yes, it was a very hard year. I didn't really gel with it, I even thought about packing in halfway through but I stuck it out till the end of the season. Getting bad results at GPs on the Suzuki has given me a bad reputation, I'd like to have another shot cause I'd like to prove I do belong there."

Q: What goals have you set yourself for 2010?

Ellie Hopkins, Odcombe

A: "To retain my British championship, to do a race over in America, ride for my country in the des Nations and basically win as much as poss!"

Q: You have a huge fanbase in the UK – what do you think makes you so popular with the crowds?

Jason Lampert, Milton Keynes

A: "My riding style I think plus coming from nothing and not having it handed to me on a plate. My family and I have had to work hard since I was a kid, I always give it 100 per cent – I never give up."

Q: When you are racing do you think about who you

are battling with or is it just the same whether it's Cairoli in the GPs or Mark Jones in the British championships?

Spencer Barnes, Taunton

A: "It doesn't matter who it is, all I want to do is win!"

Q: Tommy Searle and Max Anstie seem to be doing pretty well at their first attempt in the American SX series – how do you think you'd get on at it?

Simon Thomas, Ilminster

A: "I haven't really done much supercross, I would have a go if I had the bike set up for it and had some time to practice."

Q: Is there a rider that you enjoy riding against the most and why?

Gareth Young, Plymouth

A: "Probably Bill Mac, we don't give in to each other on the track. And I enjoy practising with Nev and Willet."

Q: When I've been at British GPs it's always easy to know where you are on the track as the cheering follows you around. Can you hear it and if so does it give you much of a boost?

Neil Palmer, Midlands

A: "Yes I can hear it and it gives me the biggest boost ever, like at Mallory I loved it. I was trying to put a good show on for all you fans – I love it when they all get behind me."

Q: What is the significance of your #60 and will you be running #1 this season?

Rich Middleton, The Gower

A: "I will be running #1 for British, #60 for everything else. I'm gonna stick with 60 as most people know that's me now and after winning the British with that number I would like to keep it. I have had a tat on my neck with Ando and #60 on so I'm scarred with that number for life!"

Q: Do you think you'll earn enough in your motocross riding career that you'll be able to retire at the end of it?

Jack Turner, Winchester

A: "No, definitely not – I'm lucky to get through the year! I would like to do training schools with kids or something to do with motocross."

NEXT MONTH

DAVE THORPE >>>

The most successful British rider in MX history, Dave Thorpe won three world 500cc titles in the late '80s and followed this up with the Veteran's crown in 2007. Now CCM Racing's Sporting Director, you can put your questions to DT by emailing us at dbrproprobe@googlemail.com

pro probe

Brad's looking to retain his British MX1 title – and make it to the MXdN – in 2010



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BELGIAN WAFFLE!

FORMER LS HONDA TEAM-MATES CLEMENT DESALLE AND DENNIS VERBRUGGEN FACE OFF FOR THIS MONTH'S NUT-JUGGLING CONTEST...

Interview by JP O'Connell Photo by LS Motorsports

DBR: Who would you like to play you in a film of your life?

CD: "I think Samuel L Jackson from Pulp Fiction."

DV: "Jim Carrey because I like his stupid humour."

DBR: When did you last clean an air filter?

CD: "It was last week – I've fixed up an old 500 with my dad and it was for that."

DV: "I think it's not so long ago."

DBR: Could you check your own valve clearances?

CD: "I can do a little work on the four-strokes, maybe take the valve cover off but not much more."

DV: "No, not even close – my studies are totally the other side of the fence!"

DBR: Have you ever eaten anything that you've killed?

CD: "No, I don't like to do this. I prefer to buy it in the shop!"

DV: "Yes, I really like fishing."

DBR: How many bones have you broken?

CD: "Two, my tibia and my foot."

DV: "My thumb, arm, shoulderblade – probably five in total."

DBR: Something you eat that you know you shouldn't?

CD: "I am always careful with what I eat however when I went to America I did try all of the hamburgers, you know – and I do like Nutella!"

DV: "Only last week I was in McDonalds!"

DBR: Do you own a pair of slippers?

CD: "Yep!"

DV: "No way, I don't like them."

DBR: You're in second and on the leader's rear wheel – do you take him out on the last corner for the win?

CD: "If I couldn't do it before, yeah sure! I'd try to do it correctly, maybe push him wide."

DV: "Yep, if you can do it without cleaning him out then that would be better."

DBR: What is the highlight of your career so far?

CD: "I have had lots of nice moments but my GP win in Loket last year has been the best!"

DV: "I was world champion in the youth class but doesn't mean as much as my podium in Lommel."

DBR: What car do you drive?

CD: "I have a Citroen van that I can put my bike in."

DV: "A Rover 75 and I love him! Can you cut this question out please?"

DBR: And if money were no object?

CD: "I really like the new BMW X6."

DV: "I'm not so into cars, I just like to keep it moody and something that gets me from A to B. I'd like to spend the money on a big house."

DBR: Have you ever blamed a poor result on a non-existent 'mechanical issue'?

CD: "No, never – if it is me then I will say it's me."

DV: "No, I don't think so."

DBR: Have you ever been arrested?

CD: "No, never arrested [laughing] but I have been pulled for driving through a red traffic light!"

DV: "No."

DBR: If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

CD: "Sometimes I can become really nervous, really quickly. Sometimes the guys will tell me something that isn't true, winding me up, you know? And I find it very hard to relax again."

DV: "Maybe my character, I would like to be a little more die-hard. Sometimes in a race if it is not going so well I can drop my head and that shouldn't happen."

DBR: What's the most embarrassing thing you've done while drunk?

CD: "I don't know the feeling of being drunk. It's not that I can't do it, it's just that I don't like it. Sometimes I see my dad drinking a beer and it looks so good so I ask to try it and it's just like uuuurrrggghh."

DV: "Oh there's lots of things, you could make a movie! I tend to fall on my ass a lot."

DBR: If you could meet any person – dead or alive – who would it be?

CD: "This crazy Belgian comedian who you will never have heard of!"

DV: "That's a good question, I think my grandmother on my dad's side."

DBR: If you were shipwrecked on an island what three things would you want with you?

CD: "My girlfriend, my bike and my close family – each of which brings a can of fuel."

DV: "My bike, my family and maybe a TV."

DBR: What's your favourite film?

CD: "It's not a film but I like Prison Break."

DV: "Green Street."

DBR: What's your most annoying habit?

CD: "I am super fussy about having my bed exactly right before I get in it – the pillows have to be just right and I also always have to have a tissue!"

DV: "Whenever someone asks me to do something I always say 'sure, I'll do it in a bit' and then it doesn't happen."

DBR: Where is your favourite place?

CD: "Wherever there is a beautiful track."

DV: "Either at a nice lake or at the beach – I like to be near the water."

DBR: Do you have any fears or phobias?

CD: "The clown! I saw a film when I was a boy where this clown stole a baby, I don't want to see that film again!"

DV: "Heights, it's real bad!"

DBR: What's your most prized possession?

CD: "My family, materially my bike."

DV: "My Rover – a nice grandfather car!"

DBR: Have you ever been in a fight?

CD: "No, I'm not a guy who fights – it's just not me."

DV: "I think every guy must have been in at least one fight!"

DBR: Is winning a race better than sex?

CD: "For me I can't compare them, they are completely different!"

DV: "It depends which girl I have the sex with! No, really, I think it's the same but in a different way."

DBR: How do you have your steak?

CD: "Well done."

DV: "Rare please."

DBR: Blonde or brunette?

CD: "My girlfriend is blonde so it better be blonde!"

DV: "Blonde and brunette."

DBR: Something about yourself that nobody else knows?

CD: "I race a 500 two-stroke in charity events."

DV: "This will surprise people – I do actually train during the week!"



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MADISON:SR



Gordy's got his season off to a great start with the British SX title

STARTER'S ORDERS!

THE COUNTDOWN'S BEGUN TO THE ULSTER CHAMPIONSHIP AND WHEN THE DESERTMARTIN STARTGATE DROPS WE ALL KNOW WHAT STOPS...

Words by **Stevie Mills** Photo by **Sutty**

The countdown is on! Round one of the Ulster championship is at Desertmartin and the Cookstown club will as per usual have the circuit fit for a GP come March 27. It won't be the first outing this season for several of our Grade A riders as the Maxxis and Red Bull Pro Nats series are both getting off to a flying start.

So why the early kick-off for the UK race calendar? Has someone in the Met Office predicted a heatwave destined for the UK shores at the end of February? Or have Youthstream realised that piping MX GP into the living rooms of thousands of fans – not to mention potential sponsors – in March is simply not a good idea!

Well, I have to agree that watching some of the best riders in the world slithering back down hillsides while others crawl away from bikes cemented up to their fuel tanks in mud does not make for exciting racing or make our sport look remotely glamorous.

And while we all know that the GPs certainly are glamorous, what they're not is a cost-effective way for some of our world class riders to make a living. Luckily, between the Maxxis, Red Bull Pro Nats, British Masters and Under 23 series the Carl Nunn's, Martin Barrs and Gordon Crockards of this world can actually make decent money racing just on the mainland.

With snow and rain still being the order of the

day on the Emerald Isle, Desertmartin continues to be the only facility capable of providing successful practice days during these winter months. At the moment the scene is awash with hype as to who's going to be the best this season. Well, we'll see come March when the gate drops just who has been working hard.

The new race format of three 20-minute motos should keep the racing close and exciting this year and the argument that riders will not have to work as hard in the gym really holds very little water for the majority of licence holders. The way I see it, these shorter races will see all the top guys on the limit throughout the entire moto.

Robert Hamilton has rekindled his motocross career with Team G&G Ross. Hammy is due a little good luck and perhaps 2010 will see him back at the front of Irish and Ulster motocross. For the past three seasons Hammy has been plagued by injury and the ex Ulster MX2 champ will campaign Yamaha machinery and is hungry to establish himself as a contender – watch this space!

Gordon Crockard, British SX champion – sounds good doesn't it? And with the number two podium step covered by GC in the International SX class surely the Crock Star's mobile must be bouncing with renewed offers for his 2010 MX campaign! Crazy as it may seem,

GC is still without an offer from any of the premier British teams so far – is it a sign of the times or is it that team managers are scared to bet on him?

Bottom line is this. There are far more riders than there are teams and in today's world talent will only get you so far, that is unless you bring serious wedge to bolster the team budget. All the more reason for GC to come out swinging, winning the British SX championship could well be the tonic needed to secure enough private backing to see GC behind the startgate for another shot at the Maxxis.

Positive and determined – not to mention talented – people always seem to shine through negative situations that tend to get in the way of success in life and one such bod is Martin Barr. The withdrawal of Relentless financial support for the Hooper Suzuki team left him without a ride but Marty still stepped up his training programme in preparation for the season ahead. And his determination has been rewarded with a place on one of the most professional teams in UK motocross – PAR Homes Honda.

A fully fit Martin on competitive machinery certainly has the makings for a very exciting MX2 series so good luck to Martin and PAR Homes. I do believe that 2010 might just be Martin's year...

Stevie
dirtbikerider 27

ALL NEW 2010 FORMA DOMINATOR COMP



SKYWALK SOLES



Two tone colours add a touch of class to the Skywalk® anti slip/oil rubber sole. The best around for keeping your feet firmly planted on the footrests

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Comfort is assured thanks to the personalised inner sock which features gel padding in the ankle area and air mesh lining for breathability, this all ensures the perfect fit.

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Security lock buckles are a must when riding off road, any collision can open ordinary buckles allowing the boot to come loose, but on our unique buckle it has to be opened in two points before unfastening.

Developed and tested under the toughest conditions by Cedric Melotte throughout the 2009 GP season and being worn for 2010 by James Noble and the Proppa.Com Honda Team.

SRP £259.95

Barcelona was the high point of a series that failed to burst into life



INDOOR ILLS!

THE FINAL ROUND OF THE IEWC IN BARCELONA WAS A CRACKER BUT THIS DOESN'T DISGUISE THE BIG PROBLEMS FACING THE SERIES ORGANISERS...

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

We're just weeks into the New Year and already a champion has been crowned – Taddy Blazusiak, the 2010 Indoor Enduro World Cup winner. Somehow it doesn't seem quite right to be handing out championship winning silverware so early in the season – especially as the title fight started during the tail end of '09 – but that's the way it is. There's no disputing the fact that Taddy is a deserved recipient of a shiny FIM gold medal, he did after all top the podium at each of the four rounds of the series.

By virtue of the fact that Taddy is the only full-time indoor and extreme enduro racer in the world it's little surprise then that he dominated the championship. He rocked up at the season opener in Sheffield fresh from clinching the US Endurocross title, showed in no uncertain terms just how much he'd raised his game and secured IEWC win #1. With the majority of his expected closest rivals failing to perform – David Knight and Mika Ahola due to illness and Ivan Cervantes due to a lack of form – it was obvious Taddy wasn't going to be headed en route to his first IEWC title.

Fast forward to the final round of the series and although Taddy didn't win, win, win he didn't need to as the title was already his thanks to a third consecutive event-topping performance at round three.

So what of the 2010 Indoor Enduro World Cup? Well, it was good, disappointing and

indifferent – but not in equal measures. With two of Britain's top indoor enduro stars failing to perform in Sheffield – David Knight and Dougie Lampkin – and with both unable to commit to the full championship, it meant Graham Jarvis was left to fly the flag for Blighty single-handedly. There's nothing can be taken away from Grimbo's sterling performances and fine fourth place championship result but with fewer Brits mixing it up on a regular basis than in previous years a little of the series' sparkle was missing.

It's no secret that the IEWC series is having a hard time of things at present. With the long-standing Barcelona event initially missing from the calendar, its reinstatement as the championship's final round was in many ways the series' saving grace despite the fact that the title had already been decided. The best event of the championship, it was the only event after the season opener that attracted a halfway decent entry.

The fact that the IEWC is a winter championship isn't helping matters. For a long list of reasons the fact that the championship starts in one year and ends in another complicates things to the point that the series simply isn't moving forward as many hoped it would. Why the FIM don't address this issue is anyone's guess.

Even if the IEWC series were to become a three-event championship – which it might well do next winter – if it were run during a period of

four, five or even six weeks prior to Christmas it would, many believe, start to stabilise, strengthen and possibly grow.

Compacting the series into the quiet months at the end of the season would result in Christmas rolling around with a new champion having been crowned. Teams and riders alike would have plenty of time on their hands to ready themselves for the new WEC season and riders that were switching teams would be able to commit to the whole championship.

As soon as the WEC or ISDE was over riders would be able to focus on preparing for the indoor series, do little else for a period of a little over one month and then be free to do whatever they wanted to do – go on holiday, compete in extreme events, focus on their WEC preparations. It seems a simple solution in theory and is what many teams and riders would prefer but whether it does happen remains to be seen.

One thing that's certain is that something needs to change. If there's one thing that the final round of the series in Barcelona showed it's that indoor enduro racing is still as exciting, unpredictable and entertaining as ever. It wasn't at every stop of the series but it was in Barcelona.

Maybe a 'less is more' approach can be the answer? Fewer events run exclusively during November and December with the championship put to bed, so to speak, before Christmas. Just a thought...



MONSTER
ENERGY



MONSTER HUNT!

MONSTER
ENERGY

WE'RE ON THE LOOK-OUT FOR A NEW **MONSTER ENERGY** GRID GIRL — AND WE WANT YOU TO HELP FIND HER FOR US...

Monsters — they're bloody everywhere! The Himalayas have got the Yeti, the Rockies have Sasquatch, Mexico's got Chupacabra, Southpark's got Scuzzlebutt and Scotland's got its very own beastie lurking in the depths of Loch Ness. Why, even DBR's home town of Morecambe has got Planet Janet who every Friday and Saturday night scares the bejaysus out of male visitors to Queen Street's many boozers...

Well, now we're on the look out for a monster of our very own and when you're looking for a monster who better to hook up with than Monster Energy! Of course, we're not looking for the type of monster that'll put the willies up you on a moonlit moor at midnight, hell no! We're looking for the complete opposite in fact — a Monster Energy grid girl! Monster Girls are wild, boisterous, exciting, rebellious and scandalous, Monster Girls are not just a pretty face but an attitude, changing their fashion, hair, make-up, speech and whole lifestyle to live the Monster brand to its fullest. They dance, they drink, they party till dawn, they can't be held back or controlled, Monster girls are admired, adored and

not to be messed with.

So how about it? Do you know someone who fits the bill? Is your other half a honey? Your sister scorchio? Maybe you have a drop-dead gorgeous gal-pal? Does the lady in the block of flats opposite look a beauty through binoculars? Or if you're one of our foxy female readers you could even fit the bill yourself?

Over the next three issues of DBR we're calling on our red-blooded readers to help us find a Monster Energy grid girl who, when chosen by our panel of 'experts', will feature in a professional Monster girl photoshoot exclusively for DBR and represent Monster at the British MXGP on **May 30**.

To submit your entry you can either send a pic or pics to us via email at anthony.sutton@dirtbikerider.co.uk or by post to **'Monster Hunt', DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe LA4 4AG**. Entries must have the permission of the lady in question plus her name, address and her daytime contact number. Please note, all candidates must be 18 or over...

Entries close on **April 30**.



SMITH

HART AND HUNTINGTON GOGGLES

Using Smith's brand new Fuel v.2 goggles as their canvas instead of skin, famous Vegas tattoo shop Hart & Huntington have created their first ever line of motocross goggles. Integrating Carey Hart's sharp styling with the heritage and premium performance of Smith Optics these Fuel v.2 goggles provide the best in fit and comfort while promoting just the right amount of airflow to keep your vision clear and fog-free.

Price: £55.95

Supplier: racefx.co.uk

Contact: 0845 450 1448

APICO

T-BAR SET

If you check out the tool boxes of any top MX mechanic you'll see that T-bars are an essential piece of kit for the pro spanner spinner. The T-bars in this set from Apico come in all the sizes you'll need to work on your Japanese dirt bike (6, 8, 10 and 12mm), are well built, well weighted and have rubber coated handles that help you get a really good grip on 'em which makes them the absolute perfect thing to loosen your nuts!

Price: £17.50

Supplier: apico.co.uk

Contact: 01282 473190

GAERNE

SG-12 BOOTS

The SG-12 is Gaerne's flagship boot and as such is a reet Bobby Dazzler. Considered by many to be the best motocross boot on the global market today the SG-12 is worn by many top pro riders including Carl Nunn, Matiss Karro, Kristian Whatley, Jason Dougan and the wonderfully Twisted Bryan MacKenzie. Check out the new range of colours at your local Gaerne dealer today.

Price: £439

Supplier: mrs ltd.co.uk

Contact: 01423 772885

APICO

EVOLITE SPROCKET

Apico's range of Evolite sprockets are pushing the envelope when it comes to aluminium chain wheel technology and they're available in a whole heap of colours and with varying amounts of teefs so it's possible to tune your gearing just right.

Price: £26.60

Supplier: apico.co.uk

Contact: 01282 473190

ZETA RACING

HOLESHOT DEVICE

Basically this is a super sick holeshot device that comes complete with a lower fork guard, all as one clever little fellow which makes it a perfect bit of kit for the mechanically retarded. The release ring is hinged so you don't even need to take your fork leg off to fit it and there's no cutting, drilling, filing or any other crap like there is with the old-school set-ups. If you can't fit this in 97 seconds you either have too good a cup of tea or you lost your 5mm Allen key... Simple.

Price: £59.99

Supplier: madison.co.uk

Contact: 0870 034 7226

RISK RACING

PALM PROTECTOR

It's a problem mostly suffered by desk jockeys and dish washers but I reckon that at some point or other we've all DNFed races because of blisters. There are many theories as to what you can do to prevent the bubbly buggers from ruining your ride with the latest possibly being the easiest and most effective too.

Risk Racing's Palm Protectors are a very thin, protective layer that offer full coverage protection of the palm as well as the saddle area between the index finger and thumb. Worn under the gloves they're claimed to help reduce arm-pump too...

Price: £7.99

Supplier: riskracingeurope.com

Contact: 02892 699770





FOX RACING PLATINUM RACEWEAR

Worn by Buildbase CCM's Tom Church – and others – this striking new Platinum racewear by Fox is definitely the kit to be seen in this spring. Featuring all the features Fox racewear is famous for – including that fantastic fit – it also teams up well with this V3 Carbon helmet and F3R boot to create an awesome get up from head to toe.

Price: V3 Carbon helmet £280 Jersey £42
Pants £138 Glove £30 F3R boot £220
Supplier: foxeurope.com
Contact: 0191 487 6100

FORMA DOMINATOR COMP BOOT

When you think of motocross boots the first names that spring to mind are Alpinestars, Sidi and Gaerne but there's another company building bad-ass boots and that's Forma. Forma boots are a cracking bit of kit – they're well designed, built to last and they look pretty cool too – which is why it surprises me that they're not way more popular. Look out for a pair at your local dealer or on the hooves of James Noble as he hunts for MX1 glory this year.

Price: £259.95
Supplier: racefx.co.uk
Contact: 0845 450 1448

PRO CLEAN GRIP LOCK

Fitting new grips can be a real pain in the backside with everyone having a different idea of what works best – some say grip glue, others say spray paint while some go down the contact cleaner route. Pro Clean's Grip Lock is probably closest to the latter so it's a no mess way of getting your grips to stick – simply spray a light coating on the inside of your grip, slide it into position then leave it well alone for just a few minutes and you're ready to rip!

Price: £4.50
Supplier: bike-cleaner.co.uk
Contact: 01305 759966

BOLT TRACK PACK II

No matter how often you tighten your dirt bike's nuts and bolts at the race track you can pretty much guarantee that every so often one of the little blighters is gonna unscrew itself and jump to the relative safety of the track below. That's why it's always handy to have spares sitting in your tool box just waiting for the moment they're needed. That's where this Track Pack II set from Bolt comes into play because it contains pretty much every nut or bolt you'll ever need in an emergency...

Price: £9.99
Supplier: apico.co.uk
Contact: 01282 473190



TY-MENDOUS!

ethnies

I'm not the sort of person who usually writes in to mags but after reading JP O'Connell's interview with Ty Kellett I felt a strange need to email you. I was at Weston with my dad and brother – luckily we were all only watching – and were on the start straight where the accident happened.

When I was reading the piece I felt a shiver go up my spine when Ty's mum described how she got there and the sand was covered in bodies under foil sheets. That's exactly how it was and I can't begin to imagine how she must have felt when she found his bike. Anyway, there's no need to dwell on that because Ty's obviously making a brilliant recovery.

At the time of the crash there were some dreadful rumours flying around on website forums and although I did read somewhere he was out of intensive care it wasn't until I got DBR that I knew he was so much better. I hope he continues to recover at the same rate and that when we go to watch Weston again this year we'll get to see him racing.

Louise, Nottingham

Thanks for taking the time to send us an email Louise – see, it wasn't that hard was it princess? Seriously though, when we got the call from JP to say he'd been chatting to Ty at the gym we were buzzing all day in the DBR office. Just goes to show the false information some keyboard warriors can spread.

GOOD TIMES!

I read your magazine every month and I'm motocross mad – I even love washing my bike! I'm just writing to tell you how great your magazine is – especially Walker's tech tips as I love tinkering with my bike.

I've been riding for a couple of years now and I love it but due to the recent recession it's been a hard time and I was without a bike so for some time I had to ride my friends' bikes. But this Christmas my dad made me the happiest person alive and got me a 150 – I was speechless.

All the time I was off the bike it was you DBR who kept me into dirt bikes and for that I thank you.

Ted, Dunstable

Now that, Ted, is one Bobby Dazzler of a Christmas pressie! We've just done a quick poll in the office and Sutt's best Chrimbo pressie was a KX100 in 1988, Sean's was a 50cc Italjet in 1977 and Marge's was a dead pigeon on a piece of string in 1990! You've got a bottle of Muc-Off heading your way to keep your pride and joy clean but from the sound of it you need no encouragement from us...

BIKE WANTED

I'm just writing to say how great your magazine is – I've had a subscription for near enough two years now. Ever since I was little I always wanted a motocross bike but failed to get one but hopefully I'll either get a pit bike or my mate's SW85 soon (although I would put BWs on it). Anyways, I hope this gets published...

Wilf, West Sussex

Hey Wilf, thanks for your letter fella – hopefully you get yourself fixed up with a mosickle sooner rather than later so you've got something to use your Muc-Off on.

WE WANT WAKKER!

First up thanks for my Muc-Off after my letter was published! I know the mag is full of great stuff every month but I want to ask if you can put in a few more articles about fixing MX bikes?

I think a lot of readers have older bikes – many of which are two-strokes – and looking at the responses the sponsored riders give to questions about if they could measure their valve clearances it's not just us newbies that need advice on how to keep our bikes running. I'd like to change my piston and would like to see articles like that which we can keep and look back to when needed.

Anyway, keep up the great mag!

Stephen, via email

Hi Stephen, thanks for your email but if you knew how hard it was to get Wakker's column in some months you wouldn't wish increased content from him on us! Luckily, his 'Hot Hints and How Tos' CD-Rom has got lots of info from the mind of our tip-top tech on it – to get a copy email richard.wilkinson@dirtbikerider.co.uk and he should be able to hook you right up!



THAT'S MY BOY!

Hey DBR, please print a picture of my lil man Diesel – he is your biggest smallest fan ever and I'm a big fan too!

Tamzin, via email

Delighted to oblige! Now where's our pic of mum, eh?

BAD PRESS!

Okay, it says Rant at the top of your letters page so that's exactly what you're about to get from me! I love motocross – I've been involved with it in one way or another for over 20 years – and I'm sick of being seen as being a hooligan in the eyes of the general public.

The latest example of how we're all a bunch of tearaways concerns the teenager who was killed in Manchester when he hit a bloody bus on a YZ125. He wasn't wearing a helmet, he had two passengers on the bike with him and he was riding like a nutter down a busy road. Now I didn't know the kid and I certainly don't wish anyone dead but I reckon it's safe to say he's got about as much to do with motocross as I've got to do with hanging out on street corners in snide sportswear and racing Novas around supermarket car parks. I'd also question where the bike came from in the first place.

But don't you just know that the media is going to link his stupid actions with a sport that demands both responsibility and dedication.

Rant over!

Ray, via email

Deep breaths Ray, deep breaths. We've seen the story on the internet but haven't – yet – seen any reports in the media that have made the dead lad out to be a motocross rider. But we know where you're coming from...



GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

WELL HERE'S WHERE YOU SHOULD BE SAYING IT...

Write to Rant at the usual address or email us at rant@dirtbikerider.co.uk
All letters/emails must be accompanied by a full address.
Oh and please don't send emails all in capitals. Cheers!

LETTERS WIN PRIZES

Write to Rant, get your letter published and you'll win a one-litre trigger bottle of marvellous bike cleaning fluid Muc-Off. And if we rate your letter highly enough you'll also receive our star prize – this month a pair of **Etnies RVM shoes**.





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*Benicassim, January –
Shaun's looking faster
and fitter than ever*



SHAUN AGAIN!

HIS FIRST SEASON AS A FULL FACTORY RIDER WENT PEAR-SHAPED
EARLY ON BUT ONE YEAR DOWN THE LINE SHAUN SIMPSON'S
BOTH OLDER AND WISER — AND AIMING TO LIFT THE MX2
WORLD TITLE HIS OWN WAY...

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY SUTTY

*The Scot's discovered
a new, more selfish
attitude to his racing*

© Rutger Pauw/Red Bull Photofiles

Leaner, meaner, faster, fitter! It wouldn't be the start of a new season without the majority of riders you speak to telling you how much better they're prepared this time around. Sometimes they're telling you the truth – or at least what they believe to be the truth – but seven times out of 10 it's total rubbish.

Red Bull KTM factory rider Shaun Simpson doesn't have to tell me he's leaner, meaner, faster or fitter because after spending a little time with him at the Everts training camp in Benicassim, Spain, it's blatantly obvious that the soon to be

22-year-old Scotsman has been working hard and eating right since I last saw him around four months ago.

Off the bike Shaun looks much lighter than I remember, his cheek bones are way more prominent than before and he has a very healthy, positively charged glow about him. On the bike he's just something else. He's still ridiculously fast, his line selection is as direct and effective as ever and it's obvious he's having a ton of fun riding the new factory KTM – if there's anyone who's got the 'jump for show, turn for dough' mantra dialled in it's Simpson.

But let's be honest for a moment, Shaun's always had a certain amount of flair on a bike and while the extra level of fitness he's carrying into 2010 can't do any harm a lack of physical strength has never been a problem in the past either. I reckon the biggest and most influential change to 'The Simpson' is in his attitude and it's this all-new more selfish and self-assured persona that's enabled him to make the changes necessary for him to be considered a massive threat to win this year's MX2 world championship as a factory rider.

Up until the 2009 season the

>>

Simpsons had functioned as a tight family unit within Roger Magee's Lizard/Wulfsport/KTM UK set-up so Shaun was always well within his comfort levels off the bike as well as on it. But after a stellar season in '08 – where he elevated himself into the highest echelons of the MX2 class – the youngster from Gauldry was picked up by the factory KTM team who made big changes to the way Shaun went about his racing. Not necessarily negative things on the whole but things that maybe weren't best for Shaun at that time.

"I think the whole deal of getting into the factory team actually worked against me a little bit last year," says Shaun. "Rather than doing what was best for me I went along with things a little bit too much but after having a year with the factory team I know everyone that bit better now and they've all told me I'm too nice and I need to speak my mind more. In the past that was never really my style – I always liked to go along with things and not make too much friction."

"There has come a point though where I've got to start doing what I want and not what other people want for me. For instance last year we had Hugo America training Max Nagl, Jeremy Van Horebeek, Joel Roelants and

myself – it was going to be whole team deal and so I went along with it. It was my first time in a factory team and I didn't know what to expect but it turned out that I wasn't getting enough of Hugo's time – when I needed him he wasn't always there and he wasn't full-time either so even if I just needed to ask him a question it wasn't possible. At the end of the day it just wasn't what I needed which is why I hired my own trainer for this year.

"I also worked with Twan [van den Heuvel] back in 2008 but this time I've taken him on board full-time so he's by my side all day every day and he'll be at the races too keeping an eye on what I drink and what I eat, he'll be there to give me massages, he'll be there when I'm running or cycling and when I'm at the gym he'll be there too. He's good for me and has already made some big changes to the way I do things – like my diet.

"Twan's already shown me that eating properly is very beneficial. I still crave chocolate and crappy foods all the time but I can really see the positives of eating healthily now. Twan's there the whole time so he can give me what I need to eat when I need it so that's one thing less I have to think about. At the end of the day that's what he's there for,



© M. Jahn





Shaun's taking a different approach to preparing for his second season on a factory bike

hopefully in a year or two it'll all sink in and I'll eat healthily for life.

"So far with my new improved diet I've lost around five or six kilos and that's just through eating properly. As a result of that I'm feeling very fit and mentally strong as well. I get up in the morning and I feel like I'm good to go for the day – I feel really alert and healthy."

Another advantage over last year will be starting the season with younger brother Stefan spinning the spanners right from the off. "He definitely does a good job with the bike and I've got 100 per cent faith in him. He can be quite stubborn and outspoken at times but that's a good thing – he knows what he wants but at the same time he knows what I want too. We speak exactly the same language and that makes things so much easier whether we're talking in English, a bit of Scottish or a mix of the two. Sometimes he even knows what I want or what I'm feeling just by looking at me.

"He can see that I'm riding well at the moment, I'm riding loose and enjoying it and he gets motivation from that too. He's my brother

and that just makes things easier you know – we speak most days and we have a special bond. I realise he's given up a lot for me, he's out in Austria away from his friends and family and he's giving me 100 per cent towards my career and that's something I think about and I appreciate. Everything he does with the bike is perfect and so that's something else I don't have to worry about."

So that's already two positive steps towards success but there are more. After feeling a little bit out of sorts in '09 as he lived the factory star jet-set lifestyle which meant working out of the factory truck at the races, for 2010 Shaun's going back to basics and bringing his own camper to the track for each GP. And this has another benefit too – it keeps old man Willie close by.

"Having my family around is 100 per cent important to me. My mum has been holding the fort back in Scotland – keeping things organised and paying the bills – and while my dad isn't so much involved with the team as he was when we were with Roger he is still involved.

"This year he'll be driving my camper for me and taking care of some other things so I don't have to. A lot of the guys fly to the races but the way I've been brought up is with the camper thing and after trying flying to the races last year I found that I didn't like that so much – I didn't enjoy getting up early in the mornings, the hotel food and being more organised with my kit so I only took what I thought I needed rather than the whole lot wasn't so good for me either.

"Travelling in the camper is the style I like – it's good to be able to have everything I need with me and be able to go to bed when I want and wake up when I like and they're all things I appreciate. My family is 100 per cent behind that and so my dad will even drive the camper to Bulgaria – it's the first GP of the year and to have all my creature comforts will be a big benefit."

So far we've got a new attitude, a new trainer and some old favourites brought back into play but what else has Shaun learnt that can help him seal that all important MX2 world title before he ages out at the end of next year? >>



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SHAUN ON...

NO BRIT CHAMPS FOR THE '08 CHAMP!

"It's always nice to race at the British championships and I think it's a very professional series with some great tracks. But I've only got another two years in MX2 so it's important to maximise my potential to be world champion. The big problem with the British series is the schedule and the types of tracks we race at certain times of the year – it's no use having a hardpack race before a sand GP or vice versa. The way the schedule is makes it more difficult to prepare for the world championship which is both mine and KTM's main priority this year."

WEIGHT WATCHING!

"I've always been a little bit heavy for MX2 and that's something I've been conscious of in the past. I'm not sure what Musquin weighs but I would imagine he's 65 or 70 kilos at the absolute most and I'm around 10 kilos heavier than that – carrying that kind of weight saps a lot of power."

"I haven't consciously tried to lose weight for this year but with the training programme I've been on and the eating schedule I've been following the weight has been dropping off at the rate of around a kilo a week – in the beginning anyway – and I'm really feeling much lighter and great for it."

"I feel nice and loose on the bike and it's definitely done me some good. I'm now in the same weight region as the other contenders and I'm not at a slight disadvantage before we start. I've practised a few starts here with the other guys a couple of days ago and I'm one of the best MX2 guys so I'm quite happy with that – I couldn't beat Max [Nag] on the 450 but I think that's to be expected."

INVESTING IN HIMSELF

"I would say that 50 per cent of my salary gets invested back into my career. To take my trainer Twan on full-time required a big financial investment and then there are other things too – physical tests, blood tests, food allergy tests, supplements and loads of stupid little things you have to buy so it all stacks up. Over the year it fairly mounts up but at the end of the day you've got to give 100 per cent now and if I'm to get the big financial bonuses and all the perks of being a winner then you have to invest. Ideally the money I've paid out and invested I should win back and more."

WHY STEFAN SPINS SPANNERS...

"Stefan's a few years younger than me and as he's grown up he's seen what I've gone through with my racing career and at some point I think he decided it wasn't for him. Some people don't understand the amount of effort riders have to put in. It's a nice life but it's a tough life too – the travelling, the riding, the cleaning, the training. There are major perks to being a rider and major downsides too and he's seen quite a few of those."

"I don't think he ever dreamed of being a mechanic he just kind of started washing the bike, grabbed a few spanners and sort of started doing more and more until he was the main mechanic. It's easy to forget he's still only 19 years old but in my mind he's one of the best in the business."



© M. Jahn



© Rutger Pauw/Red Bull Photofiles

Paddling for the paparazzi!



"Well at the beginning of last year we did some things that were good and some things that were bad but we learnt a lot from all of them. We did quite a lot of hardpack riding in the beginning of the year then went back to Belgium and with the first three GPs being on hard terrain that was a big mistake. The weather was bad and we could only ride really deep sand tracks so when I went to Hawkstone and had a really good ride there I won everything really easily and I was pumped."

"Then we went to the first GP and the ground was rock hard – it was twice as fast as we were used to and to be honest it was a struggle. The French guys had been practising and racing on hardpack tracks and they were ready for it. We were as fast as them but we were pushing over the limit and we could only do it for three or four laps. Okay, for race day at Faenza it rained but it

wasn't so sweet – I crashed out there in the mud and then we went to Bulgaria where it was dry and very fast and I just wasn't ready for it."

"So that's something else we can improve on for this year. After Mantova I'm going to stay down in Southern Europe and ride lots of hardpack – I'll race Valencia, come back for Hawkstone then head back to the hard tracks and do a couple of rounds of the French championships so I know what to expect from the French guys and so we're ready for Bulgaria and the first few GPs."

Even though the MX2 class is purely for under 23s in 2010 and beyond, the level of competition is higher than ever in the 250F division. And there are two riders in particular that Shaun thinks will be his biggest competition come the end of the year – German wunderkind Ken Roczen and

reigning world champ Marvin Musquin.

"In 2009 they were both up there every week. Marvin and I are on the same bike and I know how good that is while we all know that Ken's on a good bike too and he's light as well so he's definitely going to be quick out of the gate. I could name a handful of other riders who'll be there or thereabouts but I know for sure these two are going to be the most consistent guys."

"In some ways having a bad year in 2009 wasn't such a negative thing because I'm not going to be in the spotlight so much until the season begins. I'm quite confident that I can have a good year and I'm ready to race with those guys and beat them every week – I know I can do it. And if I don't win the MX2 world championship this year I know I've got another shot next year and if I don't do it again then I'll just have a go at getting the MX1 title instead."



Even rock gods like
Led Zeppelin drummer
John Bonham lived the
Team Green dream

VISIONARY!

ALEC WRIGHT, THE MAN WHO CREATED TEAM GREEN AND CHANGED THE FACE OF OFF-ROAD MOTORCYCLE SPORT, DIED OF A HEART ATTACK IN JANUARY AGED 77. WE RECOUNT THE SPORTING LIFE AND TIMES OF A LEGEND SPANNING 50 YEARS...

Words and photos by **Pete Plummer**

"Just two men – my dad Keith and Alec Wright – have been the greatest influence in my life. They made me into the man and the rider I am today. I can never thank him [Alec] enough for what he has done for me and there are many others who could say the same."

Dave Thorpe – three times world champion

"He was a determined and driven man – and quick on a bike. In the 1960 Welsh 3 Day on our BSA twin we hit a milk float, a grocery van and a wall to win the sidecar class on the same time as the solos. It had never been done before or since."

John Gazeley – Alec's former sidecar passenger, business partner and friend

It's universally known that three-time world champion Dave Thorpe achieved his titles ('85, '86 and '89) on a Honda and the critics will tell you that Alec Wright never produced a world champion. But it was DT's earlier intensive training with Wrighty and Kawasaki that set him and countless others up for the future.

Training camps, riding schools, mechanic's courses, superb preparation of bike and rider, sign-written trucks, corporate image and a professional standard on and off the track were all part of the Alec Wright ethos. Add the massive schoolboy element, the registration scheme for dirt bikes, the Team Green club and his support for those promoting off-road sport – including T+MX and DBR – and he leaves an incredible legacy.

And, to give credit where credit is due, it was Alec who signed up Stefan Everts to ride for Jan de Groot so Kawasaki did finally get that elusive world championship in 1995 – but 'Ace Boss' had just retired.

Irrespective of world titles, the list of riders whose careers Alec advanced reads like a who's who of motocross – including Thorpe, Kurt Nicoll, Paul Malin, Mervyn Anstie, Greg Hanson, Kevin Ruddock, Jonathan Wright, Stephen

Sword, Jeremy Whatley, Matt Bates, Tony Marshall, Marnicq Bervoets, Geoff Mayes, Georges Jobe, Brian Wheeler, Bryan Wade, Rob Hooper, Rob Andrews, Mark Fulton, Andy Nicholls, Billy Liles, Carl Nunn and so on spread over several decades...

And Alec's incredible influence doesn't end with motocross. Team Green schoolboy MX rider John Reynolds went on to become BSB champion for Kawasaki in 1993 while Alec's son Colin – who's held several responsible positions at Kawasaki – is now a talented team boss in his own right and has produced three BSB champions. Alec had a lot to be proud of.

It's not generally known that prior to becoming the face of Kawasaki and his emergence as the driving force in motocross he was a talented rider and admired by a previous generation. An extremely competent bike mechanic of the old school he took up grasstrack racing, scrambles and trials. He excelled as a sidecar driver with John Gazeley in the chair. They built the bikes they rode and enjoyed support from BSA until becoming the official Greeves factory pairing in 1962 giving the famous British marque their first ever successes in sidecar sport.

Alec and John enjoyed a great relationship with Bert Greeves and competitions manager Bill Brooker and with Johnno making the sidecars they had a good time at Greeves. They either won or finished in the top three in the Beggars Roost, Vic Britten, Sidcup 60, the Mitchell and the Mitchum Vase, the Perce Simon and the John Douglas and most national trials of the period. In 1965 they launched an attack on 'the Welsh' again but their 360 Challenger motor proved too fragile for Alec's flat-out style and they holed a piston on the first day. The Greeves factory support stopped when they went to work for Paul Butler making Villiers-engined Butler trials bikes but the money ran out so they set up their own engineering business that included mending cranes.

>>



Alec gets a hug from his
protege – and reigning world
500cc champ – Dave Thorpe
at Frome in '87, much to
Kurt Nicoll's amusement

Early days with Thorpey





Alec and John Gazeley show the steely determination that helped launch Team Green

The list of riders and team personnel who have progressed through Team Green is huge – eh Geoff Walker?



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With Belgian legend – and inspired Kawasaki signing – Georges Jobe



Alec's very first motocross signing was Carl Nunn's dad Stuart back in 1976 to ride the 420 or 'Green Pig' as we called it then. It was a cracking deal for the time as Stuart was paid £200-a-week and got to keep his prize money, buying his first house with the proceeds. "The Green Pig had rubbish suspension, a steel tank that weighed as much as the bike and massive power for then," remembers Stuart. "I told Alec at one meeting I'd lost third gear and he said 'best not use that gear then Ace'. What a star."

Geoff and Freddie Mayes followed Stuart into the Kawasaki Competitions Developments camp on the Hatfield road in St Albans with Freddie doing centre meetings and Geoff racing the British championships and GPs. The following year Rob Hooper was also Kawasaki-mounted.

Alec had a nose for business and was a skilled negotiator. He never raised his voice but he was also extremely forthright and you always knew where you stood. He made a lot of friends and a few enemies but I was one of the chosen ones and we got on like a house on fire for 39 years. He had a wonderful way with swear words and he was no

respector of job titles. When he went to work at Kawasaki UK first in Slough and then Bourne End he would walk into an office with a smile on his face and things would be fine. If he shut the door then someone was due for a bollocking irrespective of who it was. He made few friends in the boardroom but his reputation as a cunning and hard man to deal with mostly sprung from his disagreements with schoolboy dads who had absolutely no idea of his vast depth of knowledge gained from his previous life in the sport.

He passionately believed in schoolboy MX as a family sport but when his riders moved into the adults he thought they should see it as a job of work. "When you started work at 16 you didn't take your dad with you and he didn't tell your boss what to do," Alex once told me. "Fact is they're riding for me. Okay, they're riding at weekends but they work for Kawasaki and I'm the boss and they're going to bloody well listen and learn." With Alec it was all fairly straightforward – if they didn't listen they were out!

The Team Green concept was borne out of the massive following he saw for football. "How much more interesting it is to have a team that includes not just the riders >>

Jem Whitley – pictured with son Kristian – benefited from Alec Wright's vision



Dickie and Alec are all smiles after his Belle View 'demo' lap



UNCLE ALEC

A REGULAR DBR CONTRIBUTOR IN THE '80S, DICKIE DYE WAS ALSO AN IMPORTANT COG IN THE TEAM GREEN MACHINE...

Words by Dickie Dye Photo by Jack Burnicle

In the 1980s if you were a motocross racer and weren't quite nippy enough to acquire a contract with the mighty Honda Race Corp (HRC) a very, very close second was to race for Kawasaki Heavy Industries (KHI).

Alec was the boss. No question. His mission was to win the world motocross championship and subsequently factory chiefs – the 'J Models' as he often referred to them as – dug very deep indeed to finance this dream.

"Okay Ace," he once said to me. "We're going to call you Dickie Dye from now on. We have a marketing plan for the new Team Green training schools. We've got the back page of the T+MX for the next 50 years or so and we're going to push this whole training thing and you're in charge.

"Here's your budget [he lay a page of A4 on the table], here's your bikes [another A4 page] – you can do what you want with them but no racing.

You're rubbish at that. You've tried it and it didn't work. You're never going to be world champion and that's all we're interested in. Your future is in training Ace. What we're looking for is orphans who are brilliant motocross riders. Racers with no parents to give me crap about what their kids should or shouldn't be doing. Off you go."

I'm not sure if that all happened in one day. It's how I remember it but, in any case, that was the gist of the whole deal. That's how Alec was. Straight talking. Take it or leave it – I took it and the adventure began. I've got many, many anecdotes of my time with Alec – certainly too many to go into here. So here's just one from the Belle Vue Supercross of 1986.

Kawasaki were there in force – Georges Jobe, Jeff Ward, Rob Herring. All the teams from Europe with a sprinkling of Americans to spice things up a bit – and me! All the riders were casually walking round the track which was still under construction, the TV company was setting up equipment, bikes were being tuned and noise tested and I was having a bite to eat and a chat with my mates...

Alec came up to me in the Team Green awning. "All right Ace? You're on!" I looked around. He was talking to me. Just to me. In front of all the surrounding Kawasaki superstars and mechanics. "Get your gear on. The TV wants you to do a few laps to show 'em all how it's done. C'mon Ace. Get out there..."

I pulled on my gear and grabbed my goggles. My bike was started and ready outside the awning. I climbed on it and rode slowly out into the arena followed by every rider at the event. The small crowd already beginning to gather all cheered in anticipation of someone, anyone, having a ride around the track. I rode slowly past the double and triple jumps, the huge step-ups and killer whoops.

Nervous? I was s**tting myself!

>>

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BACK WITH A BANG!



Photo: Ray Archer.com

Round 2

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What MX1 / MX2 / MX2

Round 3

When 02 May
Where Duns, Scotland
What MX1 / MX2

Round 4

When 13 June
Where Lyng, Norfolk
What MX1 / MX2 / MX2

Round 5

When 25 July
Where Foxhill, Swindon
What MX1 / MX2 / MX2

Round 6

When 15 August
Where Farleigh Castle, Wilts
What MX1 / MX2 / Vets

Round 7

When 29 August
Where Silverstone, Northants
What MX1 / MX2 / MX2

Round 8

When 03 October
Where Hawkstone Park, Shrops
What MX1 / MX2 / Vets

The 2010 Maxxis British Motocross Championship is back with a bang.

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With no less than eight different manufacturers entered in the series, competition will undoubtedly be fierce. This year sees the introduction of an exciting six race format with three races each for MX1 and MX2 along with your chance to see the best youth, womens and veteran racers at selected events. The 2010 calendar features some excellent new circuits along with classic Grand Prix venues to provide what promises to be some of the closest, most exciting racing seen for many seasons.

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"Well," said the TV host holding a large mic. "Here we have Dickie Dye of Team Kawasaki and Kawasaki boss Alec Wright to tell us live just what's going on here at Belle Vue this evening and tomorrow, then I think Dickie is going to show us all how it's done..."

Alec was completely at home. "We've come here this weekend to win some races. We hope by being involved in these kind of events on the TV it will create some good, positive publicity around the sport of motocross. Dickie is one of our team trainers and he's going to show us all how to race around this track to give you a taste of what's to come."

As I set off to give my live TV demo I wanted the start straight to be 100 miles long and lead out of the stadium to anywhere but the first set of whoops at the end. I tried to ride through them slowly and the bike stopped as both wheels dropped into bottomless holes and the crankcases sumped out on the top leaving me balanced, motionless. I had to be lifted out by two marshals! I continued round the track knowing at the very least I would have to jump all of those same whoops as I approached them once again.

But oh my god! The whoops were the least of my worries! The jumps were huge! When I looked up the take-off ramps all I could see was sky! Not even any part of the stadium roof! Some were flat-out in third or fourth gear with little or no landing space!

Too soon I reached the whoops again. I took a deep breath, accelerated and cleared them by 10 feet or so before running straight into the steel barriers. But I continued on my way, hitting the first of the big doubles hard and clearing the downslope by five or six feet. The handlebars nearly collapsed, my chin whacked the crossbar pad and I immediately tasted blood in my mouth. But it wasn't over...

I rounded the next left-hander and pinned it – third gear, fourth – and as I took off I knew there was no way I was ever going to make that triple. With a thud I planted my front end into the upslope of the third jump and kept going – Superman style – as the bike stopped like it had hit a brick wall. As I lay on the track, motionless, I heard a distinctive voice. "That was great Ace..."

The camera then turned to three Kawasakis now heading at speed round the track towards us. It was Herring, Ward and Jobe. "Okay," said the host, "this is more like it – Alec tells us this is how it should be done." The trio cruised effortlessly over the jumps and whoops, showing off in spectacular fashion.

By the time the three had completed five laps I'd just about got my breath back. Alec put his arm round me. "C'mon Ace, we needed someone to crash a bit and show the other side of this sport. It's no good watching people go round and round without crashing. The public want to see crashes. I knew you wouldn't let me down Ace. Great show. Well done."

Jack Burnicle, who seemed the most concerned for my well-being, was waiting 10 feet or so away with a camera. Alec laughed again. "C'mon Ace, no hard feelings. Give us a smile for the camera – you're the star, not them..."

To sit at my laptop and think of only one story of my time with Alec is difficult. Without exception, the Alec Wright experience was all good for one reason or another. Life in the green camp was always an adventure.

Happy days. Lucky me...



This article's author Pete Plummer presents Alec with a pic of Paul Malin



The list of riders with cause to thank Alec goes on and on with Kurt Nicoll...



...Tom Church, Mark Hucklebridge...



...Paul Malin, Stephen Sword and (below left) Stefan Everts and Billy MacKenzie all enjoying success with Kawasaki

but families, friends and followers," he explained to me. Ever the businessman, he also saw it as a tool for selling bikes, clothing and accessories. He was also aware of the possibility of riders sticking with the Kawasaki brand for life. With considerable input back to the factory in Japan the KX60, KX80 and big-wheeled 80 (100cc) class machines were developed. With Kawasaki also making 125, 250 and 500cc bikes they had the largest MX range of any manufacturer so puce green was everywhere.

To illustrate the cunning, thought and planning that went into his schoolboy 'baby' the KX80 for the UK was actually 82cc while the European model was just 79cc. Using the old UK schoolboy ruling that allowed engines to be rebored to take oversize pistons because of cylinder wear the 'English' 80 with its electrofuse cylinder wall that could not be rebored had the inbuilt advantage of being a highly efficient 82cc to start with. And with dads trying to put UK pistons up Dutch barrels and vice versa it was good for business too. Nice one Alec!

Dave Thorpe rode for Alec from 1980 to '82 and then 1990 to '92 and there was also Kurt Nicoll and lots

more in between and since. The once little lads like Tony Marshall, Carl Nunn and Stephen Sword who ripped through the schoolboys winning every capacity class were very much part of the vision he had for the betterment of the sport.

While he exerted considerable influence over riders and at trackside, his greatest contribution is possibly that he changed the way the motorcycle trade and industry needed to look at the sport and be all part of the same package. He supported the Bristol Dirt Bike Show, bought the back page of T+MX for Kawasaki for 20 years and supported the federations for years by giving bikes as raffle prizes.

Unlike so many in the motorcycle industry he never saw off-road as the poor relation and he also saw outside sponsorship and satellite teams as all being part of the way forward too, hence Action Workshop Kawasaki, MJ Church Kawasaki, RWJ Diesels etc etc etc.

It's an amazing legacy but over 30 years ago he said to me "it don't matter how good your bike is Ace, if you've got nobody to ride with and nowhere to ride it ain't worth a carrot" so, please, let's all heed the message from a true visionary...

MULTIPLE CHOICE!

WITH THREE RANGES, FOUR CAPACITIES AND TWO VERSIONS OF EACH CAPACITY, GAS GAS HAVE A WHOPPING 24 TWO-STROKES IN ENDURO TRIM FOR 2010. AND THEN THERE'S THEIR 250F...

WORDS BY GEOFF WALKER PHOTOS BY SUTTY

Gas Gas are stepping things up again this year and are offering a range of bikes to get every off-roader just a little bit moist. First up you've got the ECF250 four-stroke that comes with a DEP tail pipe as used in our test. Then there are three different two-stroke ranges – Standard, Six Days and Racing – each with a choice of 125, 200, 250 and 300cc machines. And if that ain't enough all models also come in both 'EC' and 'CC' trim...

The EC models come as fully homologated bikes whereas the CC models come as non-homologated units. They retain the front headlight and sidestand but lose the tail light, speedo, homologation parts and the 'certificate of conformity'. The good news for us in the UK is the fact that the CC models can still be road registered and they retail for approximately £345 less than the EC models. Good times.

Yip, those smart seniors at Gas Gas are going for it in big style by offering you, the consumer, pretty much everything you could ask for in an off-road bike. Good work el Gas Gas geezers!

And another added bonus is that as part of the Gas Gas UK team you, as a customer, are always only a phone call or email away from the latest set-up tips and information from Captain John Shirt Jnr and his technical team to keep your new Gasser gassin'.

Stepping up to the plate with the ECF250 four-stroke is a good move for Gas Gas and the engine they have chosen is a proven and amazingly reliable lump as

used in the WR250. Gas Gas wanted to have solid performance and with this motor they have certainly chosen one of the best electric-booted motors possible to slot into their chassis. I personally think the bike looks absolutely superb with the new one-piece, slimline rear plastic section and black colour scheme. The bike flows in its design and ergonomics giving it a look of meaning business.

The fact that the bike is available with the stock and 'race' pipe here in the UK shows the ongoing search for performance for the customer. The Sachs shock coupled to the Marzocchi forks is a tried and tested combination and I was looking forward to seeing if the new settings would work with the four-stroke motor producing the torque and ponies through the previously two-stroke-only chassis.

The two-stroke range continues to be refined for 2010 with improvements aimed at making the bikes even more user-friendly as the suspension finally takes responsibility and aims to deliver a vastly improved and balanced chassis. The unbalanced feeling from the chassis has pretty much been the only negative for me with the Gassers as in the past I've never jumped on the bikes and immediately felt comfortable enough to enjoy the early part of the ride.

So I was looking forward to being let loose on the bikes to see how they have improved this feeling to match up to the incredible motors which have been made to find traction. I simply wanted to find out if, finally, the collar would match the cuffs with the two-stroke Gasser range! >>



Some people will do anything for a positive test

Gas Gas' 'big' two-stroke eats up fast, open going but how would the 300 handle some trials terrain



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Gas Gas have gone for a proven powerplant for their 250F



The huge 2010 range – this is just a selection – means Gas Gas have got something for everyone...

On the day we had the 200, 250 and 300 two-strokes and the all-new 250 four-stroke to test at an amazing secret test venue, deep in the pretty frikkin' freezing Pennines. It was on!

The 200 is always a blast and the test model was fitted with an FMF tail pipe which is used on the Six Days model. The lightness and flickability of the 200 makes it a joy to ride and I knew the day was going to go well as within a minute the comfort levels on the bike were at a new level. The motor as expected pulled strong and the torque produced from the motor makes it workable in the most slippery of conditions. It was hard to get the exact feel for the overall set-up of the 200 as the lightness makes these bikes work great. It would only become apparent if the new, more user-friendly Gas Gas mentality would work on the larger capacity bikes as they pump out the big numbers of torque and BHP. The 250 brings a smile as the motor gives an

impression of having more cubes than its quarter-litre status would suggest. The amount of torque produced makes instant traction easy to find and a feather light clutch action makes using the power to its optimum a pleasure. What also helps make use of every bit of power is the new-found balance and subtle feel to the entire bike. Everything just seems to work better when the bike inspires confidence and the new, massively more user-friendly feeling which feeds up through the entire bike gives you a boost to go and tackle the challenges met in the great outdoors. The bike is not soft to the point of not getting any feedback as there is enough of a balance from compression, rebound and preload to keep a good level of 'flickability' to move the bike around with ease.

Big Paddy, big power. I am a fan of a 300cc motor – the torque, the overall feeling of grunt on the edge of getting buck wild if required gets my

attention every time and the Gasser delivers all of this with a smooth style. To say the 300 is solid would be an understatement as this is a very mature package with top level racing development. The ergonomics are quite racy as you sit 'on' this bike rather than 'in' it and the handlebar bend and height are comfortable for me at over six foot. This bike is built for comfort and speed which makes for a top rating in the DBR book of fine rides! The roll-on power delivery makes the 300 almost 'four-stroke' useable as it has an amazing amount of super low-down, smooth grunt – perfect for gaining that extra couple of feet up a technical climb or step without breaking traction.

As fun and fulfilling as the three two-smokers were it was the ECF250FT I really wanted to get my big Oirish mitts on. The 250F class of bike is a massive favourite among trail riders and racers – a competitive market of competitive yet >>



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easy-to-ride bikes with a friendly feel.

When I first sat on the little thumper – as with all the other 2010 Gassers – the ergos were all there in place. Handlebar to seat to peg all felt good and the controls all felt solid and ready for action. The bike sat quite low into its suspension stroke with my weight upon it but that's expected with such a user-friendly machine. The digital speedo and timing display is easy to read and set up and the light switch cluster does the business. The on/off switch is located next to the throttle and just above the magic 'e' start button.

The bike breezed into life and the lack of vibration was immediately evident. The motor is solid and the engineers have done a good job of working the chassis around it. I was afraid of a weighty feel to the front of the bike due to the heavier engine but as I spent more time on the bike it was easy to work out the feeling and feedback the bike was giving me.

The motor on the test bike got better as the test wore on and it will continue to get better as these engines take some time to run

in and reach their true potential. The engine braking is too much during this period and if the bike is being ridden in a bit of a slow motion style it would feel a little strangled. The racing tail pipe was fitted to the test bike and this made the power increase and allowed the bike to accelerate from zero up through the mid-range to give the bike a shot at lifting itself through some technical steps and sections.

The factory have made the forks hard enough to cope with the slightly different forces which come with a four-stroke motor without going too far and the rear shock follows along and keeps the bike stable and solid through the terrain. There was a great section with loose rocks all over the place (check the video on www.dirtbikerider.com) and these could be hit absolutely flat-out both up and down the hill section on the little thumper without any fear of it doing anything out of the ordinary.

It took confidence in the bike to hit that kind of terrain tapped so it's a thumbs up from Wakka when it comes to the ECF250...



The ECF250 gets the Wakker thumbs up



The super-light 200 is just a joy to ride



SPECIFICATIONS

EC200 >>

Capacity: 199.4cc
Bore and stroke: 62.5mm x 65mm
Transmission: Six-speed
Front suspension: Marzocchi 45mm (295mm travel)
Rear suspension: Sachs (310mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Wheelbase: 1475mm
Seat height: 940mm
Kerb weight: 95kg

EC250 >>

Capacity: 249.3cc
Bore and stroke: 66.4mm x 72mm
Transmission: Six-speed
Front suspension: Sachs 48mm (295mm travel)
Rear suspension: Sachs (310mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Wheelbase: 1475mm
Seat height: 940mm
Kerb weight: 101kg

EC300 >>

Capacity: 299.3cc
Bore and stroke: 72.5mm x 72.5mm
Transmission: Six-speed
Front suspension: Sachs 48mm (295mm travel)
Rear suspension: Sachs (310mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Wheelbase: 1475mm
Seat height: 940mm
Kerb weight: 102kg

ECF250 >>

Capacity: 249.6cc
Bore and stroke: 77mm x 53.6mm
Transmission: Six-speed
Front suspension: Marzocchi 45mm (295mm travel)
Rear suspension: Sachs (310mm travel)
Front brake: 260mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Wheelbase: 1475mm
Seat height: 940mm
Kerb weight: 110kg



Rev-head Zach Osborne is one of the pre-season favourites in MX2...

...and new Samsung Yamaha signing Nev Bradshaw must fancy his chances too



WIDE

THE 2010 MAXXIS BRITISH MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP IS ALL SET TO KICK OFF IN DEVON THIS MONTH WITH AN ALL-NEW RACE FORMAT AND A PLETHORA OF GENUINE TITLE CONTENDERS...

Words and photos by Sully

Starting one week prior to Blighty's perennial pre-season race – the international at Hawkstone Park – the 2010 Maxxis British Motocross championship gets off to an early getaway this year and that, believe it or not, is in just two weeks time (or even sooner if you didn't buy DBR as soon as it hit the shelves you naughty boy)! Widely recognised as one of the toughest national championships in the world, the eight-round series is steeped in history with some of the world's greatest motocross racers having lined up over the years to do battle in the ACU-sanctioned series.

The 2010 edition promises to be no less interesting than past battles as the latest crop of talented competitors are all set to bang bars, scrape plastic and punch it out for points, titles and a prize fund that this year is worth a whopping £96,000! And it's not just the amount of prize money that's grown either as 2010 brings 50 per cent more race action with it as the Maxxis series gets set to embrace a three-moto format.

Whether the riders and industry are set to embrace the three-moto format is still debatable though. Some members of the motocross community applaud the decision to run shorter motos saying it's better for the fans, good for TV and could lead to closer racing. On the flipside others argue that shorter motos reward riders who don't train so hard while for the teams preparing a machine for that extra moto could send costs rising at a time when budgets are already tight.

There are other changes upsetting the apple cart too. Morning qualification is now done away with and instead of 60 riders per class fighting it out for 35 start positions as it was last year only 40 riders per class will be allowed to enter each round and all 40 will be guaranteed a spot on the startline. The timed qualifying session will now be for gate pick only while the fastest 12 will then partake in some Superpole style shenanigans to see who gets that all-important first pick of the gate.

>>



OPEN!

Runner-up in 2009, Jake Nicholls (#45) will only be satisfied with the MX2 title in 2010



The 2010 series will come to a bar-banging conclusion at the famous Hawkstone Park

OPEN!

With on-the-day qualification a thing of the past one point of confusion is over the criteria used to pick the 40 starters for each round. According to Series Manager Brian Higgins it's simple. "GP contracted riders are in first followed by the top point scorers from the 2009 series. The remainder will be made up from the other applicants. International wild cards will always be added at the discretion of the individual round promoter." Where that leaves the plethora of privateers, local heroes – who maybe can't afford to enter the full series – and freshly upgraded experts from the AMCA or youth ranks etc I'm not too sure. Let's hope the ACU resurrect the qualifying championship so it's not all so much of a grey area.

A handful of riders guaranteed a starting spot are those considered to be in with a chance of winning the title – let's take a brief look at those guys...

In the MX1 class reigning champion Brad Anderson has to start as favourite on the PAR Homes Honda. Although Brad didn't dominate the series in the same way that the previous champ Billy MacKenzie did in '08, the nifty North Easterner still managed and groomed the points lead he eked out at round one and wasn't headed in the points chase after that all year.

Staying with the family-like PAR team – which is an environment he likes – you can expect Brad to be just as strong as he was last year.

But Ando isn't the only '09 champ to line up in the MX1 division this time. MX2 champion Stephen Sword returns to the 450 class with CCM and has to be considered a threat to win his fifth British championship. Also looking to add another Maxxis title to his tally will be '04 and '05 champ Josh Coppins who's racing a V-twin Aprilia throughout this campaign. And there's another former champ who could potentially land the title – Carl Nunn. MVR-D's MX1 challenger might be entering the twilight of his career but the twice-crowned MX2 champion is still good for a race or round win and if everything goes his way the title isn't out of his grasp either.

Also knocking on the door this year will be the nearly men – Tom Church, James Noble and Gareth Swanepoel. All three have what it takes to be a British champion but haven't yet put together all the pieces required to score that all-important series victory. Will 2010 be their year? Don't bet against it...

Down in the 250F class there are no past British champions in the mix so whoever steals it in the end will be tasting major championship success for the first time. Among the main

contenders are Red Bull KTM UK team leader and 2009 series runner-up Jake Nicholls, MVR-D Suzuki's 2008 Junior world champ Matiss Karro and the rev-monster Zach Osborne who'll be lining up behind the gate on a UTAG Yamaha. All three have won British championship motos in the past and all three have the right equipment to get the job done in 2010 so it could all boil down to who wants it most and who has the most luck over the 24-moto series.

Also in the hunt will be Zach's UTAG team-mate Mel Pocock, PAR Honda's young gun Scott Elderfield, KTM UK's Ulsterman Graeme Irwin, Samsung Yamaha's Neville Bradshaw and the rider who replaced him at DB Racing Honda – Elliott Banks-Browne.

As well as the main championships there'll be a sideshow at each and every round as the Women's, Veteran and MXY2 title chases are fought out. Provided she can stay injury free there's little chance that Natalie Kane will be beaten to the Women's title – expect Kerry Wilson, Hannah Mcleod and Stacy Fisher to be up there too – while in the MXY2 division there's whole heap of speedy teenagers. The Veterans might not be as quick as they once were but you can still expect plenty of bar-banging duels from these seasoned warriors.



Teenage star Scott Elderfield



STR Honda's Nathan Parker and James Noble pose with the boss Steve Turner

QUICKIE QUESTION TIME!

FIVE MINUTES WITH BRIAN HIGGINS >>>

As Series Manager of the Maxxis British Championship Brian Higgins is the man responsible for pushing the series forward. We interrupted his busy schedule recently to get a brief insight into some of the reasons behind the changes to this year's series...

DBR: What are the main reasons for deciding to run a three-moto format?

BH: "The 30-minute motos lose spectator appeal. We surveyed the teams last June and out of the few who did respond they were not against it. Obviously three 30-minute motos would be too much for riders to cope with so 20 minutes seemed the obvious length. Furthermore, when we wanted to do this a few years ago complaints were that it did not help our GP riders but now the first race they have to face is a 20-minute qualifier on Saturdays."

DBR: What are your thoughts on the possible extra costs incurred by the teams?

BH: "My view is that it's only the cost of an extra tyre. I cannot accept that they will have to fit a new clutch for a 20-minute moto. There is something wrong if they do, even with a hard rider being on the clutch out of every corner and halfway down the straight. No privateers have complained at all."

DBR: Are you happy with all the tracks you've got lined up for 2010?

BH: "Yes but I was unhappy by the length of time it took to get the contracts signed with some organisers. In this country we are always going to be weather dependant but given no rain on race days we will be in for a fantastic season. Some of the new venues will be good for the championship as well."

DBR: What is the long-term plan for the British championship?

BH: "Long-term the plan is to develop the championship further by continuing to work closely with all partners – including the teams. There is a long way to go and we're aware that there are other championships out there but the ACU Maxxis titles are the one the importers and teams would like to win most."

Baltic bullet Matiss Karro



Defending MX1 champ Brad Anderson will be determined to hang on to his hard-fought title in 2010



FUDGED FORMAT?

THE ALL-NEW RACE DAY SCHEDULE EXPLAINED, KINDA...

As in the past practice/qualifying sessions will start the day for the MX2 and then MX1 racers. However, unlike last year's format that saw 15 minutes of free practice followed by a 30-minute timed qualifying session, the half-hour session is now halved which means riders will only have somewhere in the region of three or four opportunities to put in a scorching fast lap.

But for the top dozen finishers in the Q1 session it won't matter how good or bad their best time is because the order in which they head to the line will be decided by an all-new Superpole style Q2 session where each of the 12 will ride a warm-up lap followed by a timed one and that will decide the result.

"This will give fans the chance to see the top riders challenging for the best gate choice and at the same time allow the riders a clear lap to show their skills," claims series manager Brian Higgins. "The top rider from Q1 will also have choice of their start position in Q2 – it should be interesting!"

And the changes don't end there as instead of racing two 30-minute plus two lap motos in the afternoon the 40 riders in each class will partake in three 20-minute plus two lap races at each round. But will we see better racing as a result of this? Potentially yes. Everyone loves the excitement of a race start and all that first turn drama and another bonus is that those sometimes static 10 minutes near the end of the 30-minute motos will be gone for good. On the flipside the shorter races may prematurely end some battles before they really get going.

Whatever, with less time from gate to chequers in each points-paying moto not even the fastest riders can afford a bad start, crash or other mistake – you can pretty much guarantee it's going to be electric.

RACES IN PLACES

THE WHEN AND WHERE OF THE MAXXIS >>

ROUND 1 – Little Silver, February 28

Some love it and some hate it but most agree that Little Silver Moto Park is needy of some major revamp work before it's ready to host a Maxxis round. The good news is that they've already had the diggers in and even after the recent spell of terrible weather the track surface is ready to race on. Situated between the villages of Kennford and Exminster just outside Exeter at the very end of the M5, this hillside circuit should offer an exciting start to the 2010 series! Supporting action comes from the opening round of the Ladies' championship.

ROUND 2 – Mallory Park, March 21

As host of the British GP for the last two years Mallory Park needs little introduction to motocross fans. Well signposted off the A47 on the Hinckley to Leicester road in the East Midlands, the Mallory Park circuit is very easy to find and as a full-time road race venue offers some of the best facilities in off-road sport. Mallory is a man-made, hardpack circuit with lots of jumps but little in the way of elevation changes and the tight nature of this circuit might make for some very close racing – especially with the new shorter length motos. This is where the MXY2 series kicks off.

ROUND 3 – Duns, May 2

About as close to an AMA-style outdoor circuit the Maxxis series is going to visit in 2010 and by far the most northerly, Duns will make for some exciting race action provided the rain of last year steers well clear of the Borders venue. Situated 40 miles south east of Edinburgh and a good 80 miles north of Newcastle deep in the Lammermuir Hills, the Duns circuit has a lot of man-made obstacles – doubles, tabletops, drop-offs, step-ups and a killer whoop section too. With great viewing and decent facilities this is one round worth making a long trek to see.

ROUND 4 – Lyng, June 13

The Caddes Hill circuit overlooks the picturesque village of Lyng and come June should be in prime condition to welcome Britain's fastest motocross racers for the fourth round of the Maxxis series. One of the most popular stops on the tour with both spectators and riders this super-speedy sand circuit starts out billiard-table smooth before getting stupendously rough as the day goes on but still offers some furiously fast action right to the very end. Don't miss out on MX1, MX2 and MXY2 action at this fantastic race track!

ROUND 5 – Foxhill, July 25

Considered by some to be the greatest GP venue in the history of MX, the twin valleys of Foxhill offer a serious test for each and every one of the British MX1, MX2 and MXY2 championship warriors who rock up for round five. As scene of one of the best races in last year's championship – MX1's second moto that saw an epic MacKenzie, Church, Swanepoel, Anderson duel that was eventually won by the then future champ – this very technical chalk-based circuit with its scarily steep drops and horse-power challenging climbs promises to deliver excitement, thrills and spills once again in 2010.

ROUND 6 – Farleigh Castle, August 15

In terms of top-flight motocross Farleigh Castle is a real blast from the past and so long as it's not tinkered with too much should give riders and spectators a look back to the good old days of scrambling. Famous for being an old-school, rough as a badger's ass grassland circuit with an infamous step section or two, the Wiltshire race track – that's just a stone's throw from the city of Bath – is an integral part of British motocross history. A former host to 500 and 250cc GPs and the MXdN it is of course the scene of one of the legendary Dave Thorpe's greatest races ever way back in 1985 – check it out on YouTube! The Veterans series starts out here – expect fireworks as some ex pros return to this awesome venue for the first time in 20 years!

ROUND 7 – Silverstone, August 29

For most motocross folk the idea of racing a dirt bike at Northamptonshire race circuit Silverstone is almost as distant as the character played by the actress of the same name in the movie *Clueless*. But believe it or not the raucous sound of 40 flat-out MX machines is set to echo into the Silverstone skies at the end of August as the penultimate round of the Maxxis British championship goes off at the British home of F1 and MotoGP. Obviously the track's gonna be another man-made, elevationless jump-fest but with the series hotting up and titles on the line – the MXY2 championship will be decided here – is this a race you can afford to miss?

ROUND 8 – Hawkstone Park, October 3

It's always good to end the season on a high and there's nowhere better to do so in the UK than at Hawkstone Park. Famed for being one of the most physically demanding and technical tracks in the whole world, the infamous Shropshire circuit really separates the men from the boys and will definitely wear out the old guys in the Veteran class. With a plethora of legendary hazards – including the whoop section, bombhole, horsepower-sapping hill and scary-fast start straight – Hawkstone Park fully deserves the respect it commands.





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NEW SENSATION!

AFTER A STELLAR FIRST SEASON THE RED BULL PRO NATIONALS CONTINUE WITH THEIR MISSION TO TAKE BRITISH MOTOCROSS TO THE MASSES...

Words by Jeff Perrett Photos by Ian Roxburgh

In a very small period of time the Red Bull Pro Nationals have made a very large impact on motocross in the UK. Professionally organised, slickly run and with a festival atmosphere, the series' debut season in 2009 proved the new boys on the scene meant business.

The new boys in question are the MC Federation and they've come tooled up with an ambitious, forward-thinking plan that looks set to give the sport we all know and love a major kick up the ass. With the first year of RBPNs proving to be a big success the MCF are now busy improving the series further and in 2010 there will be three major championships – that's the Pro Nats, the Fuchs-Silkolene Two-Stroke British champs and the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup – all served up over the same weekends at the same venues.

This triple whammy should really give the fans value for money. The EYC riders will have three races on the Saturday and two more on the Sunday alongside the two main pro races. The hard-charging two-stroke riders now have the opportunity to race three Open class races on the Saturday and then three 125cc races on the Sunday. The RBPN pro class will see a line-up of 44 riders with most of the UK's main men and no doubt some big name guest stars mixing it up as the MX1 and MX2 class race together but are scored separately. Last year proved how good the racing can be when you have the best riders all in together no matter what capacity bike they are racing.

Action sports are big business these days and the MCF team are determined to take motocross into the mainstream. But first they believe the sport must move with the times – and the Red Bull 'bit' of the Red Bull Pro Nationals is a crucial part of the puzzle.

As James Noble was quoted as saying last

year "even my gran knows what Red Bull is!" and, no doubt about it, the man or woman on the street who knows nothing about MX is more than likely going to stop and take notice when one of Red Bull's 'wings' promotional team roll up in their fancy Mini in the city centre and hands them a RBPN flier. On top of that the MCF distribute on average 400,000 fliers in regional newspapers leading into each event. It's no wonder then that places like Canada Heights and Wakes Colne saw people flocking in like the glory days of yesteryear.

Getting them there is one thing of course, making sure this new breed goes away open mouthed and gasping for more is another. That's why the MCF have incorporated their popular Red Bull Elite Youth Cup and Fuchs-Silkolene Two-Stroke British championship into a full two-day weekend programme. Britain's best riders and teams – youth to professional and everyone in between – will always get a track that's immaculately prepared with the colour and vibrancy you'd expect the sport to offer up.

As well as the Austrian energy drink title sponsor, the MC Federation are pulling together a growing portfolio of big-name backers. Tyre giants Pirelli have just signed up for the next three years and will be providing a service and discounted tyres to the championship riders. Fox will be continuing with their 'Boot Camp' programme and giving a youth rider the chance to be a fully supported athlete for 2011. MD Racing/UFO have jumped on board as the official plastics supplier while Asterisk knee braces will also be heavily involved and offering up competition prizes for everyone. Cobra Motorcycles are the most recent company to get involved, working with the MCF to get new kids into the sport.

On top of the racing action there'll be plenty going on away from the track with FMX shows at every round along with a motocross try-out area for those MX virgins who've come along to see what it's all about and want a shot at it there and then. There'll be live bands throughout Saturday and Sunday, a Red Bull Party every Saturday night, a trade village and kids' zone. The big TV screen will be back with a live feed of pre and post race interviews, there'll be a new VIP hospitality area, various ticket schemes to cater for everyone and even RBPN series merchandising.

In short, go to a Pro Nat and you'll find everything you need to make it a great weekend for everyone from the hardcore MX fan to those taking their first look at the sport. For more info log on to www.redbullpronationals.com or call the MC Federation on 01865 3436660.



**The Reverend Jake Nicholls
tears it up at Canada
Heights in 2009**



**Commentating legend
'Sir' Jack Burnicle gets to
grips with Pro Open champ
Carl Nunn**



RACES IN PLACES

THE WHEN AND WHERE OF THE RBPNS >>

ROUND 1 – Foxhill, March 13/14

The series kicks off at the spiritual home of '90s British motocross. The famous circuit has had a facelift over the last few years and is gunning to return to its former glory and with the Red Bull Pro Nationals rolling into the venue it has every chance. The steep 'L' shaped valley makes for spectacular high-speed racing. Look for signs from J15 of the M4.

ROUND 2 – Landrake, April 3/4

The sweeping circuit down near Plymouth kicked off last year's series in glorious sunshine so let's hope for more of the same this year. The track is a great mix of old school/new school. There are a few whoops, a big stepdown double, table tops and nice off-cambered and flowing turns. Landrake Moto Parc is right off the A38 as you come into Landrake after crossing the Tamar Bridge.

ROUND 3 – Canada Heights, May 15/16

Yet another awesome venue, so good in fact the Red Bull Pro Nationals are going there twice as they did in '09. Record crowds made their way to the hillside circuit last year and were treated to some amazing racing matched by an equally amazing atmosphere. Canada Heights will be heavily signposted from J3 of the M25.

ROUND 4 – Silverstone, June 19/20

The Red Bull Pro Nationals rock up at Silverstone the same weekend as the British Moto GP! The MCF have pulled a masterstroke and what a weekend it's set to be. Hopefully motocross will get some new followers and the recognition it deserves, especially if MX fan Valentino Rossi comes over for a look. The circuit is on flat land so inevitably it will be a more SX style track but this will add variation to the Red Bull Pro Nationals series. You cannot miss Silverstone, it's heavily signposted and straight off the dual carriageway of the A43 near Towcester in Northampton.

ROUND 5 – Whitby, June 26/27

This has to be one of the most fun places to race in the UK. Perched up on the hills overlooking the coastal town, this track has some fantastic technical sections and flows incredibly well. Built on some pretty prime dirt the track covers two fields and breaks through trees and an old stone wall which gives it a real old-school feel – but the circuit itself is bang up to date. Although it's relatively flat there are rhythm sections, whoops, two floating tabletops for the riders to hang it out, tight switchbacks and flowing bends. It's a well designed and well presented circuit. It's easy to find too, right on the A171 in and out of Whitby.

ROUND 6 – TBA, July 10/11

ROUND 7 – Pontrilas, August 7/8

If there's a track on the series tour that's really traditional then Howton Court is the one. There's a minimal amount of modern technical track design and there's a reason for this – the place doesn't need it! Based around a curved hillside, Pontrilas has almost perfect motocross soil and flows like the wind. There's an abundance of off-cambered turns which creates ruts and plenty of switchback lines for riders to cut over and get creative for passing moves. In this case less is more as the racing is always intense and exciting. Howton Court is just off the A465 in Hereford.

ROUND 8 – Canada Heights, August 21/22

ROUND 9 – Wakes Colne, September 18/19

The Essex track has seen some memorable races in its history and saw 2009 Red Bull Pro Nationals champions Carl Nunn and Nev Bradshaw crowned. Spread over two adjoining low valleys, the track utilises the landscape to the full. On the whole the soil edges more towards hard pack but due to the creative layout there's plenty of opportunity for good bar to bar racing. Viewing is top notch too. Follow the bright yellow Red Bull Pro Nationals signs from the A1124 between Halstead and Colchester in Essex.



For MX virgins the on-track action can be simply stunning – Jamie Smith demonstrates



Freestyle plays a big part in the overall festival feel



James Noble just missed out on the 2009 Pro Open title – he'll be gunning to go one better in 2010

QUICKIE QUESTION TIME!

FIVE MINUTES WITH MATT BATES >>

MCF Chairman Matt Bates is one of the men responsible (along with Craig Elwell – the 'C' of the MCF!) in making the series happen. We grabbed five minutes on the blower with him to find out how things are progressing.

DBR: Are you happy with the way things went for the first year?

MB: "Yes, absolutely. It was hard work to get it started as anyone who runs any motocross race meetings will tell you but when I look back to the crowds we had in our first year and general positive feedback I think it's hard not to be happy. But the MCF and Red Bull want to improve and take this series onwards to be the best domestic series in Europe."

DBR: Last year there were only six rounds – three had the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup with them and the others had the Fuchs-Silkolene Two-Strokes. Why put them all together for 2010?

MB: "Simply because it makes things easier to handle both logistically and economically. We all know the financial state of the world right now so having nine events to lay on and not 17 was a no-brainer really."

That's not the only reason though.

"We really feel these events will now be something special, we can now generate a kind of Loretta Lynn's type feel where we have all the best riders in the country at one event. The kids will benefit riding tougher tracks and being part of the more mainstream media and for the best part the pros like having the kids round looking up to them."

DBR: Tell us about Silverstone. Getting motocross there is great but even better that it's the same weekend as the British Moto GP. Potentially you could be looking at a huge audience...

MB: "Yeah, we think so. It's taken a lot of work behind the scenes to make that happen. It's a project I've personally been working on for four years and now it's actually happening. We'll [MCF] be building the track with the intention of it being a permanent venue, especially now that Silverstone are also gearing themselves up for motorcycle racing too. To have our first ever motocross event there the same weekend as Moto GP will be great for the sport and the manufacturers. I think to mix the two disciplines once in a while will be good for everyone."

DBR: The racing schedule is packed in at a RBPB.

Are you concerned that it's too busy?

MB: "Not at all and people will get value for money."

As anyone who was involved in our various championships last year will testify we used 2009 as an experimental year on schedules to prepare for this year and made no secret of that fact. We ran 17 races in one day at Pontrilas if I remember and it went like clockwork. We have the system and staff that know what's required and the fact that it's the same crew for each event gives us that continuity."

DBR: So what's the long term plan for the RBPBs?

MB: "As I said, to make them the best domestic series in Europe. For our first year I think we made waves across Europe and even as far as the US – our recent feature in Racer X magazine shows that because as we know it's not that often you see American media picking up on domestic European motocross. Obviously the RBPBs are at the sharp end of our plans but I think we have a good programme and plans in place with the MC Federation itself to help this sport grow in the UK in the long term. There's a long way to go but I believe we are on the right track."

ALEC IS TYPICALLY
EVASIVE CONVERSATION!



THE WRIGHT STUFF!

HERO TO SOME, VILLAIN TO OTHERS – NO-ONE POLARISED OPINION QUITE LIKE ALEC WRIGHT WHO CHANGED THE FACE OF MODERN MOTOCROSS...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

There are many words which can and in most cases have been used to describe the late Alec Wright.

Alec guided Kawasaki UK with a shrewd mixture of iron fist, laconic wit and astute manipulation through two of the greatest boom decades in motocross history. His recent funeral in rural Lincolnshire attracted a swathe of motorcycle sportsmen to pay their respects. Among them were riders who won British titles for Team Green – Dave Thorpe, Jonathan Wright, Greg Hanson, Paul Malin, Rob Bentham, John Reynolds – and other distinguished former Kawasaki stars Rob Andrews, Laurence Spence, Geoff and Freddie Mayes, Stuart Nunn and Brian Wheeler plus team bosses and rivals Neil Tuxworth, Bob MacMillan, Alan Clews and Rob McElnea. Alec would have loved it!

A brilliant engineer and British sidecar trials champion, Alec set up in business with his passenger John Gazeley. They started working

on Kawasakis and Alec was invited to take the reins when Kawasaki UK was formed in Slough. Once there he rocked the whole UK off-road establishment with his no-nonsense assault on all aspects of motocross with his infamous Team Green livery. Training schools, the AMCA, schoolboy competition and pro racing were all targeted with resounding success throughout the late '70s and '80s via an impressive package of smart trucks, co-ordinated team gear and ruthless professionalism.

"I first met Alec when I was 13," recalls his greatest protégé, Dave Thorpe. "Dad used to drop me off on Mondays at Bryan Wade's 'Train with Wade' camps at Hawkstone Park. Alec turned them into Team Green schools but you were welcome with any make of bike. We had residential coaches plus daily visits from grand prix riders like Roger Harvey. It was fantastic. My first involvement in the 'Alec Way'! It just couldn't happen today. Alec did sessions at the end of the day when he'd

detach your brakes, take off your seat or remove all the rebound in your rear shock. He called it 'problem training'!"

Thorpe signed with Team Green at 16, badly broke his leg at Bassenthwaite in May 1980 and lost a complete year of competition. Alec stood by the tall Berkshire boy and Thorpe finally made his 500 GP debut in late '81. In 1982 he won his first grand prix motos, finished sixth in the series and was promptly plundered by Honda!

Thorpe chuckles when he remembers his meetings with Alec at Slough. "First there'd be the cough, then he'd move the ashtray around to take your eyes off anything else and finally he'd say 'right then, Ace...' and get down to business! He was a one-off. He had that freedom to be the man he was. No-one will ever have that opportunity again – the freedom to make the decisions he could – in the present day industry."

After Thorpe's departure, Alec worked with Kurt Nicoll and Georges Jobe who both

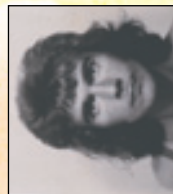
finished runners-up in 500cc world championships before re-signing Thorpe in 1990 alongside his new teenage starlet Paul Malin. With them Alec supported 500 GPs longer than any other manufacturer before turning to 250s in 1992.

I travelled to many grands prix with Alec and Dave Nicoll. It was like accompanying a pair of teenage adolescents let out of detention for the weekend. Alec's greatest joy came in stirring things up. He got bored if life moved along too smoothly. And when he got bored he was at his most dangerous. He and Nicoll could cause mayhem anywhere. Like the Madrid traffic jam in 1987 when they started blasting their horn until the whole city centre descended into deafening pandemonium.

Or the unkindly wet weekend of a German

500GP when we lacked the correct passes. I was instructed, as driver, to stop for no-one, panicked and duly collected a gun-toting soldier on the bonnet of the Merc. It was the only time I ever remember scaring 'Uncle Alec'! Leaving that race, he impatiently floored the throttle, fishtailed through the slime wrapping about 30 metres of wire fencing round the rear diff, then had me crawling underneath to disentangle the mess. We clunked and weaved our way back to the airport where Alec marched in, complained that the car wasn't working properly and obtained a refund!

The affable old rogue carried abroad his own pithy brand of Hertfordshire humour. Suddenly slowing en route to a French 500GP and announcing "looks like we've got the Old Bill for company, Ace" >>



was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job..

REIGNING WORLD 250
CHAMP GEORGE JOBE
WON HIS FIRST EVER
500 GP AT AUSTRIA'S
OPENING ROUND OF '84



JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he

DESCRIPTION SIGNALEMENT

Beaver Titulaire ★Wife Femme

Occupation } GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Place of birth } BILLINGHAM

Date of birth } 9/3/47

Country of Residence } ENGLAND

Usual signature of bearer

Jack Burnicle

Usual signature of wife

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ALEC ADVISES PAUL MALIN DURING HIS 500 GP DEBUT AT VALKENSWAARD IN 1990



1994 STEFAN EVERTS CONSULTS WITH ALEC

hardened realist. We called by at Kawasaki UK the day after his former rider Nicoll failed to win the 1992 500 world title by two points. "A miss is as good as a mile, Jake," he winked slyly!

Alec overcame cancer in 1988 by simply laughing in its face. "They've given me a shorter inlet, Ace," was his post-surgical analysis. He'd made a few enemies along life's way and cackled with glee at how much they'd want rid of him and how disappointed they'd be when he made it through – which he did, without actually giving up his beloved Benson and Hedges!

Alec was a charming and accomplished politician – cunning, innovative and unpredictable. He instinctively took brave, bemusing decisions that sometimes turned out to be tinged with genius. Like signing up 1983 250 world champ Georges Jobe who rattled the 500cc factory Hondas for the next three years, putting teenager Paul Malin on a 500 in 1989, grooming as his successor for Team Green's GP effort Jan de Groot who led Kawasaki to four world championships in the ensuing eight years and even asking me to voiceover his video review of Jem Whatley's successful British Open title-winning season with Action Workshop Kawasaki in 1991. I'd never done anything like that before, yet got a break with Eurosport television four weeks later. How did he know?

Ironically, having finished second in world championships five times during Alec's tenure, Kawasaki claimed their first world title when his final signing, Stefan Everts, won the 250 GP series in 1995 – the year Alec had retired.

Above all, though, Alec Wright made an immeasurable impact on the management, structure and marketing of motorcycles and motorcycle sport in Britain and across the world. We all have a lot to thank him for.

PEPPE ANDREANI 1988



AMAZING ANDREANI! AND THERE'S MORE...

Last month's Beat on suspension guru Giuseppe Andreani omitted two of the Italian's greatest racing achievements. As well as winning the penultimate 250 GP of 1988 in Argentina, 'Beppe' was 1988 Italian champion and, in his final international outing, finished second 250 to US legend Ricky Johnson at the fabulous 1988 MX des Nations in France. Respect!

as a car full of moustachioed, glaring Gendarmes motored past. And at Geneva airport the next day, strolling up to a baleful Swiss policeman, he tapped the butt of his rifle and said "that's a bit over the top, isn't it, Ace?"

He could be ruthless. On a plane home from one 500 GP he checked out results from the weekend's 125 round in Czecho. His Kawasaki rider didn't feature. "Looks like a case of the P45, Jake," he smiled menacingly. You never quite knew whether he meant it or not!

Alec usually threw himself a more lenient line. He liked to be chauffeured abroad and as soon as we arrived he demanded we "find an umbrella, Ace", sit outside a cafe and acclimatise at ease with some local coffee. Mondays could be rewardingly spent on a mini-vacation – that sunny afternoon in Madrid for example and a memorable visit to Venice after the 1983 San Marino GP.

If he had to fill his hire car with a group of Japanese Kawasaki bosses his apology would always be the same – and gloriously politically incorrect. "Sorry Jake but I've got the J-models with me this weekend!" Alec was also a



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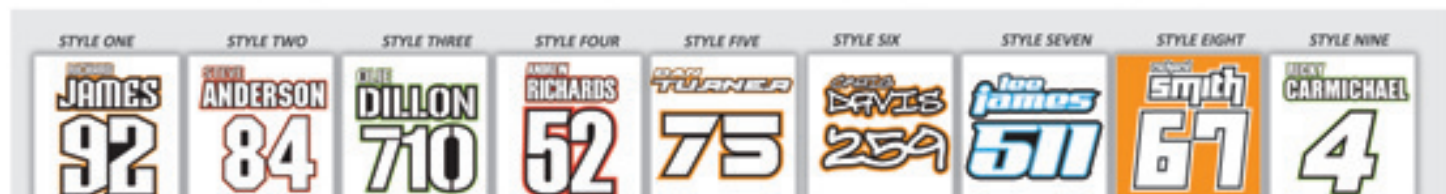
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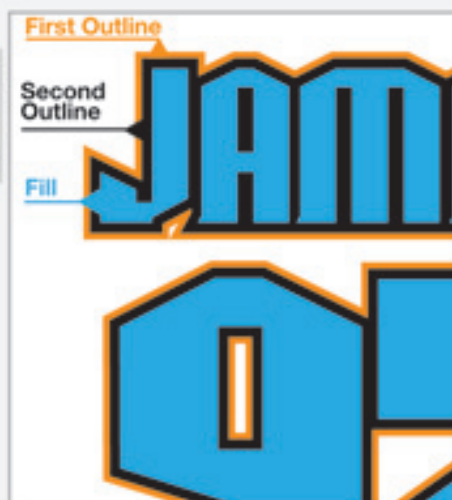
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FORK FIX!

A LEAKING FORK SEAL AT BEST IS A PAIN, AT WORST IS DOWNRIGHT DANGEROUS. HERE'S THE WALKER WAY TO FIX IT – FAST!

Words by **Geoff Walker** Photos by **Rich T**

Okay, you're at the race and little Geoff spots some oil around the fork leg of his beloved KTM 85. "Da, what's dat oily stuff at da front of me boike?" "Er, dat'll be da oil son," replies his dad who, for this little tale, we'll refer to as Jimmy (Walker).

Basically, it's not the end of the world but it seems there's a fork seal which has been damaged or filled with unwanted crud and is letting the precious cargo of fine fork oil disappear down onto the lower fork and off into the dirt bike abyss! "Oh no!" I hear you cry! "What will little Geoff and his dad do?" Don't worry, team DBR are here with a quick fix to get your fork seal replaced in double quick time...

Now don't get me wrong, this method is not a full-on service but the quick fix will keep things safe if you have a seal gone on the brake side as you don't want oil on that Bobby Dazzler brake disc! I am fully servicing the forks in the shots but for the feature we are just

demonstrating the quick step way to get back on track with the minimum of fuss and time.

Fork seals can be damaged through a number of things but the most common is usually a small chip on the chrome leg which will be caused by a flying rock from another bike during the heat of battle. An important part of this repair process is to find the reason why the seal has gone and fix it during the repair so the same thing doesn't happen straight away.

Okay, the bench in the back of your van is clear and you have whipped the fork leg out and given it a good clean – or maybe you have whipped the fork leg out and given it to your long suffering missus to clean as you sip on a fine cup of tea, nibble on a biscuity treat and give your nuts a reet good scratching.

Right, fast forward a brew and digestive and the fork is clean, your tool box is close by and your new fork seal/seals are smiling up at you from the bench/floor. Let's get to it...

001// Loosen the top of the fork leg. Bosh!

002// Drop the outer leg down to reveal the cap, inner damping rod and spring. With one hand pull the spring down and hold the top nut on the damping rod with a spanner.

003// With the rod held firm undo the top cap with another spanner or socket. The top cap can now be removed and placed somewhere safe.

004// The fork spring can now be slid out of place carefully and placed on some clean paper roll or rag. The damping rod will move down out of the way. Now pour a small amount of fork oil out into a clean container. This is so it does not pour out when you separate the legs.

005// The fork can now be carefully clamped into the soft jaws of the vice in a semi upright position. With a flat bladed screwdriver carefully prise the dust seal off the fork leg.

006// Using a small screwdriver ease the small retaining ring clip out of position.

007// The two halves of the fork must now be separated. This requires a tapping action where the top of the fork is slid up and tapped against its stop point. This will tap the inner bushes against the seal and after a few taps it should

pop the seal out as the legs separate.

008// Remove the bushes and place in order and take off the old seal. Clean the areas thoroughly and check the lower leg chrome for small chips. Use a fine grinding stone to remove and polish any chips so the leg becomes smooth again.

009// Find a small plastic bag and slip it over the fork tube. Lightly grease the fork seal and slip it over the covered fork tube and down over the leg followed by the two bushes.

010// The upper fork leg can now be slipped back into place. At this point you need a seal knocker. This tool basically taps the seal and bushes evenly back into place.

011// When the seal is seated pop the retaining clip back into place and push the dust seal back up into place. Replace the oil from the earlier step and check the height if you think it has lost a lot of fluid.

012// Slip the spring back over the damping rod after you have pulled it up to the top of its stroke and refit the top cap, tighten it all up together and secure the top cap onto the fork. Get the fork leg/legs back into the weapon and get little Geoff back on track!



001//



005//



009//



002//



003//



004//



006//



007//



008//



010//



011//



012//



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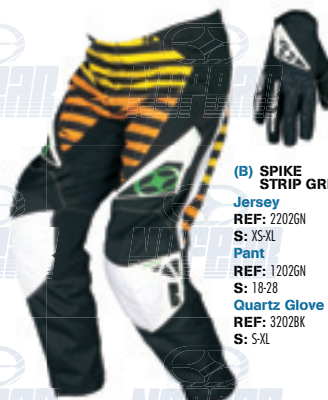
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S: XS-XL
Pant
REF: 1202GN
S: 18-28
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202BK
S: S-XL



(C) ORANGE
Jersey
REF: 2204OR
S: XS-XL
Pant
REF: 1204OR
S: 18-28
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202BK
S: S-XL



(D) BLACK
Jersey
REF: 2202BK
S: XS-XL
Pant
REF: 1204OR
S: 18-28
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202BK
S: S-XL

2010 KIDS PRIME EVO HELMETS



PRIME EVO SKULIOSIS
Helmet
REF: 6208RS
S: S-L



PRIME EVO PEG LEG
Helmet
REF: 6208PG
S: S-L



PRIME EVO GREED
Helmet
REF: 6208NE
S: S-L



(E) RED
Jersey
REF: 2202RD
S: XS-XL
Pant
REF: 1202RD
S: 18-28
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202BK
S: S-XL



(F) SKULIOSIS
Jersey
REF: 2204RS
S: XS-L
Pant
REF: 1204RS
S: 20-28
Glove
REF: 3203RS
S: S-XL



(G) PEG LEG
Jersey
REF: 2204PG
S: XS-L
Pant
REF: 1204PG
S: 20-28
Quartz Glove
REF: 3204BK
S: S-XL



(H) GREED
Jersey
REF: 2204NE
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AT YOUR DEALERS NOW AND IF IT'S NOT ASK THEM WHY?

WRITE STUFF!

GOT A SEIZED SUZI OR A DODGY PISTON RING? MAYBE YOUR RMZ'S GOT A LESS-THAN-CLASSY CHASSIS? WELL HELP IS AT HAND WITH OUR TIP-TOP TECH JUST AN EMAIL AWAY...

Words by Geoff Walker

TOO HOT TO HANDLE?



Dear Geoff,

I am the proud(ish) owner of a 1994 Suzuki RM80. Recently it overheated and since then it has been a right pain in the neck – now it has just given up. We took it apart and had the cylinder rebored and gave it a brand new piston and ring. I don't know what to do so some tips would be much appreciated. Also, do you have any info on track openings as I have been sat around the house bored out my head all winter and really need to get back on the track?

Matthew, Oxon

If the bike overheated really badly the plug or stator could have decided to go a bit wonky. If your local dealer has a similar model to yours perhaps they could allow you to test the stator from the other bike after you try a new spark plug in the weapon? If you didn't check the big end bearing when you took it apart this could be a problem as, again, if it has got really hot the big end could have tweaked out and caused the piston to seize.

As for tracks, well, the recent weather ain't been kind on them but I believe the Apex and Mepal facilities are doing a roaring trade in these winter months as they are keeping their tracks ripped and fully prepped through the worst of the weather.

JET FRET!

Hi Geoff,

I've got a problem with my 2000 model Suzuki DRZ400. I'm having trouble with my carburettor set-up mainly – I think the jets are too small. I have a FMF PowerBomb header pipe and the FMF Powercore4 rear exhaust and now it seems to choke up sometimes when I'm flat-out going through the gears. Also, when I'm in fifth gear at about 40 and then give it beans it can lag and choke.

I've been told to change the main jet to a 150 from 142.5 and the pilot jet to 27.5 from 22.5 – does this sound right to you? I'm also not sure if I should do the 3x3 air box mod once I put in the bigger jets. The engine was fully rebuilt 500 miles ago with a better piston than stock if that makes a difference?

Steve, via email

It sounds like your bike is getting a little strangled with the set-up you are using. The bike needs more air and will also need a little more fuel. The sensation you are feeling when riding is a leaning rather than a rich choke up. This set-up will also help as the new piston will be running at slightly higher compression than stock. Go with the jetting you have been recommended and work the airbox and your beloved and trusty DRZ will be stretching your arms out there on the trails.

IT'S A RING THING

Hi Geoff,

I just want to pick your brains. I've just done the top end on my YZ125 and used the piston kit out of the spares kit and the ring has no marking on it to say which way up it goes. I've never seen this before as I've always used Vertex pistons. Does it make a difference as I thought it had a right way up which had something to do with back pressure. Will it make my bike have more power if I change to a ring with the marking on?

John, via email

Like you say, the ring should really have a small marking to indicate the direction the ring should be fitted onto the piston. If the ring has absolutely no marking on it there is a possibility it can be fitted in any way but you may be best to order a ring from your dealer to be 100 per cent sure and have peace of mind as you are tearing it up out there on the Y-Zinger.

WELDED BLISS!

Hi Geoff,

Would you be able to give me details of companies that can repair ally MX frames as I have a slightly bent and cracked rear brake mount on my RMZ250. Any help or direction would be great...

Ross, via email

GMX radiators are some awesome ally welders and I am sure they would sort any welding issues you may have. They know their stuff when it comes to bike parts. Give them a call on 01371 850729 and speak to Big Bad Dave! That man will sort you right out.

REPEAT PERFORMANCE

Hey Geoff,

I have a '02 Honda CRF450 that I bought for cheap because it had a smashed crankcase, outercase and kickstart all round where the kickstart locates. I got a spare motor and rebuilt it with the new cases, piston, conrod, kickstart mechanism and refreshed the head. Once all together the bike wouldn't start – I checked everything and fitted new coil, stator coil, kill switch and did the carb with new jets.

I took the bike out to try getting it started again and it would turn over once, would catch but not start so I tried tow starting it. After about 30 minutes trying to start it I tried one last attempt to bump start it and rolled it down a hill. Once knocked into gear the kickstart slammed completely up and smashed the crankcase and outercase around the kickstart to the extent that the kickstart unit fell off.

This is the second time this motor has done this but when building it from the manual there appeared to be nothing missing or any problems. Help!

Ross, Isle of Man

It sounds like you are having a bit of a nightmare with the big CRF. It seems there is something running out of true or there is an incorrect part in the motor. You must make sure the cam timing is correct on the bike as it is easy to set the timing at the bottom of the stroke rather than TDC.

The kickstart mechanism is built and assembled to engage and release when needed but it sounds like it is engaging and continuing to throw out which is smashing the cases. It is quite difficult to diagnose through the information you've given me but maybe it's time to get along and see Mr Juan Knight at his dealership on the Island as he has the knowledge and tools to get you up and running on the big red.

(Front)

(Rear)

M8

M10



WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

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THE 'OFF' SEASON!

A SMATTERING OF SNOW SCUPPERS SUTTY'S PLANS FOR STARTING THE 2010 SEASON IN STYLE SO IT'S BACK TO UNCLE RAY'S FARM FOR MORE MUCH-NEEDED PRACTICE...

Words by Sutti Photo by Ariann Morris

Cancelled! Cancelled! Cancelled! It seems that just as soon as Britain sees a skittering of snow the whole place grinds to a halt with scheduled flights and rail journeys either delayed or culled completely and the already overcrowded road network rendered unusable. With most local councils suffering a grit shortage many rural roads remain impassable with the end result being little chance of reaching any legal off-road riding areas. And that's meant trials events have been called off left, right and centre so the opportunity to ride in the early part of the month has proved rarer than a blue steak.

And because of this the Gas Gas TXT Pro 250 spent most of January propping up the wall of the DBR office. I had been planning to blag a late entry into the local Westmorland club's Lonsdale Cup Trial but after the inclement weather forced them to postpone it from what was a free weekend in the DBR diary to one where we have no wheels – TranDawg™ is finally getting fixed – my plans to enter my first trial of 2010 have been put on hold. Until next month at least. Bugger.

But no trials means more time to practice which in my case can only be a good thing. So with that in mind I braved the elements, endured the ice and wrapped myself up snug as a bug in a rug to squeeze in another riding session at my uncle's. After a good couple of hours splashing around in the sub-zero brook, slip-sliding up the steep valley sides and falling foul of an upended tree or two I was pretty much exhausted, probably suffering the early symptoms of hypothermia and in need of a nap so I figured it was time to head back home.

On the drive back I contemplated my own endeavours, tried to figure out where I was going wrong and then somehow started wondering what sections my Uncle Raymond used to ride on his old twinshock beast way back in the '70s. I also then pondered what it would have been like to attempt the sections I ride at his farm today on one of his old weapons – it'd be carnage for sure because while I'm not so clever at the trials game today's bikes are just so damn good.

In fact, I'm of the opinion that modern day trials bikes are about as good as they will ever get. Take the Gas Gas TXT 250 Pro for example. As a stock machine out of the box it's easily good enough for the right rider to win a British championship round on. In fact the factory weapon that Adam Raga rides in the world championship isn't a

whole heap different than what you can buy from your local dealer right now – it might be a wee bit lighter but the frame geometry and most of the componentry used is the same.

If you look back five years or so it's fair to say that trials bikes weren't anywhere near as good as they are now. DBR tester Dan Clark always used to talk about flawed steering ("the front end tucks in on tight turns" or "it tends to push on a bit when cornering"), bad carburation, grabby clutches or "dead feeling" rear suspension. The 2010 Gas Gas range has none of these flaws, is considerably lighter than the competition and even comes standard with bonus items such as a super-trick titanium front pipe and a grippy skid plate that's designed in such a way it helps stop you from slipping back off obstacles when sumping out. Clever huh?

While these bells and whistles are important it's perhaps the performance of the motor that I love most about the 2010 Gasser. In the past I've relied on speed and lots of throttle to ricochet through sections – sometimes it works well, sometimes it doesn't – but with this new bike I've really got to grips with letting the motor work properly. Yeah, it still loves to rev hard but the best of the spread is reet down low where there's a plethora of silky smooth power on tap. In fact there's so much torque down there it's pretty much impossible to stall the motor – even with a big old unit like me on board!

Unlike motocross bikes – that seem to eat chains, sprockets and brake pads at this time of year – there's very little part replacement needed provided you keep on top of the basic maintenance schedule which is good news for trials riders but bad news for industry folk! But being a motocross maniac at heart I just can't help myself and the need to break out the DBR tool tray and fit some aftermarket parts is eating me up inside just like Lemmiwinks.

So thanks to the good folk at Renthall I'll be fitting a lighter 420 chain kit that should decrease weight – by half a kilo! – and chain drag too which in theory should help release more of that lovely power from the Gasser's engine and deliver it right to the Michelin X-Light rear tyre. Will it be a technological improvement? Yes. Will it look like I've fitted a bicycle chain to my motorcycle? Yes. Am I going to bleed from my knuckles while fitting it? Most likely. Will I notice a difference when I ride the bike next month?

Only time will tell...



GOING UNDERGROUND!

SUTTY SCAMPERS DOWN TO THE CELLAR THAT'S STELLAR TO RESUME A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS PIMPED-UP PRIDE AND JOY – THE SHED OF DREAD...

Words and photos by Sutti

Ain't the recession great? The bank's got me by the balls and I can't scrape together enough funds to pay my gas or electric bill, I've been living off microwave porridge for the last few weeks and can't buy any other foodstuffs because I've already eBayed my CD collection, pawned my porn and cashed in my car at the scrapyard to pay this month's mortgage. But trust me it isn't all bad...

In an effort to keep myself warm and forget all about my financial blues I've been heading deep underground to the Cellar that's Stellar to rekindle my love affair with the Shed of Dread which since the middle of last year has sat on the Stand that's Grand covering the Drain of Pain.

In the general vicinity of the SoD is a pile of parts – some old, some new, some borrowed, some shamelessly blagged and believe it or not some that I actually paid for too (in more settled financial times of course) – so with the exception of a bolt or two, a front brake lever, an air filter (the native spiders got a little hungry over the summer), some plastic parts, a set of graphics and one seat cover I actually have enough parts to complete the rebuild.

It all started quite slowly over the Christmas break when I made the great escape to the Cellar that's Stellar to avoid watching *The Wizard of Oz*. If you pace yourself correctly it's possible to prolong the time it takes to fit a new ProX piston kit to pretty much match the 101 minutes of movie gold.

With the top end rebuilt I moved to the clutch and popped in a brand new EBC Dirt Racer set of plates and springs before encasing the lot in one of those rather sexy Honda Racing covers that MF Moto are knocking out on eBay for £175. Search for the seller named mrmike1000 – who also does some great deals on other bits n' bobs – if you fancy a factory style cover of your own.

Next on the agenda was the fitment of the radiators and hoses. Aside from a good clean up of the items mentioned above with Muc-Off and wire wool there was nothing particularly thrilling about this segment of the rebuild so let's move on.

After almost 12 months of sitting in the CtS the outer races for the headstock bearings in the freshly powder coated frame had a little surface rust on them so I chucked in an All Balls replacement set from Apico to sweeten the steering deal right up. It's all pretty easy stuff – see January's Walker's World for a full how-to – although late night banging in your cellar can lead your neighbours into thinking they're living next door to Josef Fritzl. That's actually probably a bad comparison to make as we all know that he did most of his banging in complete silence... Anyhoo, with new bearings fitted the triple clamps could also be placed in position and tightened to the correct torque. Powder coated black, the clamps look pretty awesome and I can't wait to slip my forks inside them.

As I mentioned a few Project Shed 2 columns ago Lee Powles at RG3 London has overhauled the front and rear suspension units and he's done a spectacular job. The shock body and fork leg bottoms have been hard anodised black so they look just like the factory Showas fitted to Jeremy McGrath's '96 factory weapon. The internals have been reworked too and should be just about perfect for my speed and weight when I take the SoD for its maiden voyage later this year. Until then I just have to be content with how great they look sitting next to my desk.

Another company who played a blinder of turning the SoD's shoddy looking bits into the baddest bling I ever did see are the Central Wheel Company who powder coated the hubs and rims before relacing the wheels with new spokes and nipples. They're honestly the coolest looking thing ever and I've been aching to fit tyres to them for

ages to finish them off.

Tyres are a problem when you're on a limited budget but luckily for me my dad played an absolute blinder. Back in 1992 when I was running in the youth nationals we bought a pair of Bridgestone M22 tyres which were considered to be the tyre to have for hardpack conditions. But thanks to a super wet summer they remained unused.

Some 18 years later and my old man is trying to clear his garage of all my junk so along with a couple of worn out Pirellis, a Husky exhaust pipe and a battery charger he dumps these tyres on my doorstep just before Christmas. As bonafide 1990s tyres they're perfect for the SoD project and even more so considering they ain't costing me owt – not a bean!

Fitting them was the scariest thing I've ever done because I was so desperate not to scratch the awesome rims. So fully lubed up and armed with two of the most petite tyre levers I own I carefully slipped the rubber on the rims without damaging the wheels or pinching the tubes – happy times! With the tyres on, the wheels look even more awesome than before and the brand-new EBC brake discs I acquired last year finish 'em off nicely too.

Next to get a little attention was the carburettor which has spent a year sat upon the evil gas meter – booooo! A full strip down and clean was necessary as the carb is one of those parts you really don't need malfunctioning on you. To be fair it was all pretty clean in there so the rebuild was simple until the point where I lost the roll pin that keeps the floats from floating off into the bowl. I searched high and low but I couldn't find it anywhere so in the end made a replacement out of a metal rod. It does the job perfectly well so all is good in the 'hood. While the top of the carb was off I fitted a new Venhill Featherlite throttle cable too. These cables are the dog's danglies so I also fitted a new clutch cable to keep everything smooth.

The swingarm and linkage were the next items to get the clean and lube treatment. Considering the roller bearings are some 14 years old they're in great condition and after the thorough greasing they've had should be good for the rest of the SoD's working life. Fitting 'em is a doddle and just as soon as they were all settled back into place I also popped on the rear shock and subframe.

With the SoD starting to look like a motocross bike again my next step was to fit the part that for many people defines the look of a two-stroke motocross bike – the expansion chamber. There are a good few companies that produce – or still stock – exhaust systems for mid '90s MX machines, the most famous of which is probably Pro Circuit who ponied up a pipe and silencer for the SoD. Pro Circuit obviously have a rich and lengthy heritage in racing so you know that as well as looking fast this thing is going to bark too and with that in mind I can't wait to get the motor fired up. Tune in next month for that momentous occasion...

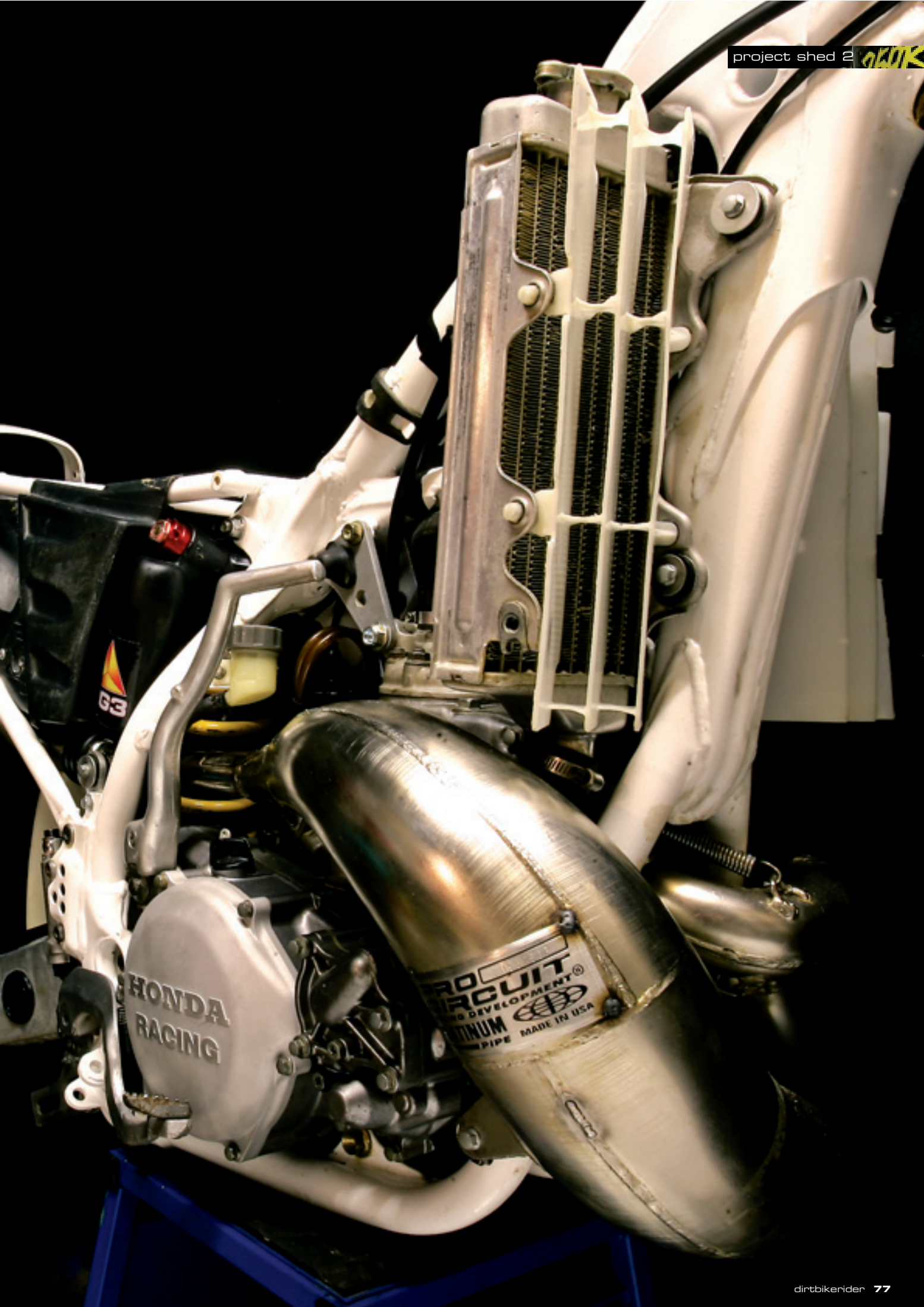
ROLL OF HONOUR!

BIG THANKS TO THE COMPANIES WHO HAVE HELPED MAKE THIS PROJECT POSSIBLE – SO FAR...

In alphabetical order I'd like to thank the following companies in a URL stylee – Apico.co.uk, Central-wheel.co.uk, Demon-tweeks.co.uk, Docwob.com, EBCbrakes.com, Garricksurfacecoatings.co.uk, Frosystems.com, Motocrossworld.com, MSRacing.co.uk, Muc-off.com, Racefx.co.uk, Renthal.com, RG3London.co.uk, Pro-circuit-racing.co.uk, Pulse-racing-products.com and last but not least Venhill.co.uk.

Without help from these awesome companies and the people who work for them the SoD would still be far from complete. So thank you all – I really appreciate it.







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SERIES

2010 TO
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SERIES

2010 TO
NO FEAR
SERIES



(A) BLUE JAGGED

Jersey
REF: 2200BL
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1200BL
S: 28-40
Formula Glove
REF: 3200BL
S: S-XXL

(B) GREY JAGGED

Jersey
REF: 2200GY
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1200GY
S: 28-38
Formula Glove
REF: 3200GY
S: S-XL

(C) CHARGED PATRIOT

Jersey
REF: 2200PB
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1200PB
S: 28-38
Formula Glove
REF: 3200PB
S: S-XXL

(D) CHARGED GREEN

Jersey
REF: 2200GN
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1200GN
S: 28-38
Formula Glove
REF: 3200GN
S: S-XXL

(E) NITRO

Jersey
REF: 2200RD
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1200RD
S: 28-38
Formula Glove
REF: 3200RD
S: S-XL



(A) BLUE

Jersey
REF: 2200FI
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1200FI
S: 28-38
Glove
REF: 3200FI
S: S-XXL

(B) RAPTOR

Jersey
REF: 2200CN
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1201CN
S: 28-38
Glove
REF: 3201CN
S: S-XL

(C) RED

Jersey
REF: 2201RD
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1201RD
S: 28-38
Glove
REF: 3201RD
S: S-X

(D) BLUE SLASH

Jersey
REF: 2201BL
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1201BL
S: 28-38
Glove
REF: 3201BL
S: S-XL

(E) BLACK SLASH

Jersey
REF: 2201BK
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1201BK
S: 28-38
Glove
REF: 3201BK
S: S-XXL

(F) OLMEC BLUE

Jersey
REF: 2201OB
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1201OB
S: 28-38
Glove
REF: 3201OB
S: S-XL

(G) OLMEC GREY

Jersey
REF: 2201OG
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1201OG
S: 28-38
Glove
REF: 3201OG
S: S-XL



(A) BLACK

Jersey
REF: 2202BK
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1202BK
S: 28-40
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202BK
S: S-XL

(B) BLUE

Jersey
REF: 2202BL
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1202BL
S: 28-40
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202BL
S: S-XL

(C) ORANGE

Jersey
REF: 2202OR
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1202OR
S: 28-40
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202OR
S: S-XL

(D) SPIKE STRIP GREEN

Jersey
REF: 2202GN
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1202GN
S: 28-38
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202GN
S: S-XL

(E) SPIKE STRIP BLUE

Jersey
REF: 2202GB
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1202GB
S: 28-40
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202GB
S: S-XL

(F) PEG LEG

Jersey
REF: 2202PG
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1202PG
S: 28-38
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202PG
S: S-XL

(G) SKULIOSIS

Jersey
REF: 2202RS
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1202RS
S: 28-38
Quartz Glove
REF: 3202RS
S: S-XXL

(H) GREED

Jersey
REF: 2202NE
S: S-XXL
Pant
REF: 1202NE
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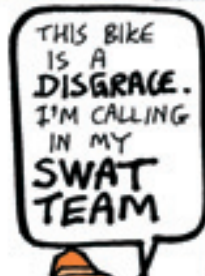
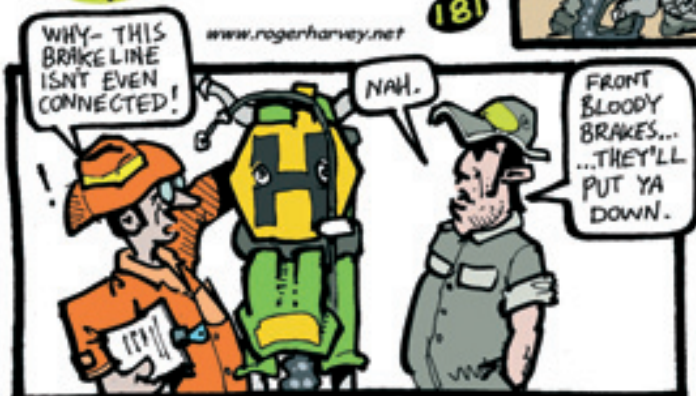
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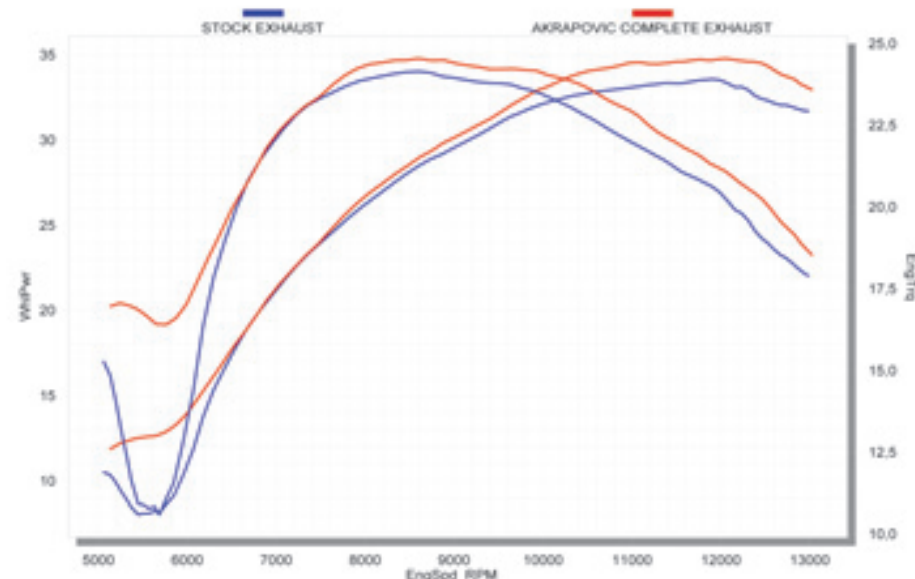
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Jake Weimer has come out and set the West Coast Lites class alight





M O N S T E R MUNCH!

WITH THREE ROUNDS OF THE LITES WEST SX SERIES DOWN, JAKE WEIMER HAD REALLY SUNK HIS TEETH INTO THE CHAMPIONSHIP CHASE...

Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki's Jake Weimer is absolutely murdering the Lites West at the time of writing of this article with three heat races, three Main Events and an undefeated record in all of them. But the thing about Weimer that makes him so valuable isn't his speed or his style but rather his personality. He's a thinking man's racer. He's funny. Actually, he's a bit of a goof! But the reality is that Weimer has had a slow and steady rise through the ranks and coming into his fifth year as a professional he's now at a level that almost no-one ever achieves – he looks unstoppable.

DBR: Hey, Jake, sorry to bother you on the phone but this is what happens when you go about winning everything – people want to talk to you.

JW: "Yeah, I know, you end up being bothered by you pesky paparazzi."

DBR: Coming into this year you had to be pretty confident given you won three supercrosses last year and nearly won the title, then won three Nationals and then served on the winning Motocross des Nations team. How have your expectations met up with reality?

JW: "Obviously, I'm happy to have done what I've done at the first few rounds. I don't think anybody could be bummed on that. I'm very happy with the way things have gone thus far. On paper it probably doesn't look as good as what I would like it to look like with lap times and win margins and stuff, except probably at round three."

"But at the end of the day that doesn't really matter. My job is to win races and get on the podium and so far I've met my expectations in that. So for me to be really bummed that I didn't have the fastest lap or whatever the case is, I can't say that I'm really bummed about it. It would be cool if I was the fastest guy by three seconds but that's not the case and that's okay. I'm okay with that. Obviously, it would be cool but it is what it is. As long as I'm getting the job done that's all that matters to me."

DBR: Even Ryan Villopoto and guys like that, they were never really that much faster than everyone else...

JW: "Yeah, you're right – and the fastest guy doesn't always win. But this year I do feel like I'm the fastest guy, although there is a lot of really good competition and the first few races have shown that. My main goal is to win races and to have myself set up to win a championship and so far that's what I've done. I'm very happy with how things have gone so far. I've won the first three rounds and that's what I wanted to do. I'm happy with that and I feel like I'm right where I want to be. I feel good on the motorcycle, I feel healthy, I feel confident, I feel motivated and everything's pretty positive right now."

DBR: How much stress disappeared once you got the first round out of the way with a win?

JW: "You just don't know who might be fast going into the first round. Anybody could come out and have stepped their game up and could blow you away but it's probably not as big of a relief as you would think, just because I didn't really think that was going to happen. I knew that I was in a good spot and that I had stepped my game up and mentally I was in a better spot. As for stress, obviously it can go up and it can go down but it's kind of weird. It's just the way life is. If it's not one thing, it's another."

"Maybe you're worried about money but then you get a boatload of money so then you're worried about something else. It seems, in life, that there's always something on your mind that can consume you a little bit so even with the first three wins there are still things I want. It's important in racing to always look forward so those first few wins, it's amazing and it's good for me – but it's over. You can't really focus on that too much. You've got to keep moving forward."

DBR: It's easy to see when a kid has talent because you can see the technique and the style and all of that but there are a lot of guys who have tons of talent that never actually win anything. You're an insightful sort of bloke so what's the difference between you and them?

JW: "I think talent – being able to ride a motorcycle easily and be good at it pretty easily – can sometimes bite you in the ass because you can get lazy. I don't think I'm the most talented dirt bike rider out there but I think I do fairly well..."

Racer X's editors at large. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...

Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and recently became one of

STATESIDE



Racing the West Coast SX series means SoCal-based Jake's virtually on home soil



DBR: Is it a case of just being talented enough to do it and then being able to work at it?

JW: "That's a tough question. You can look at it a bunch of ways but with most things if you dedicate yourself enough to it, you can do it. I mean, anybody that's riding supercross and is making Main Events, they've got talent. They've all got talent. Obviously, there's all different levels of talent but you can be the most talented rider in the world or you can have just a little talent but a lot of hard work... It's a balance that you have to put together and maybe the people who aren't quite as talented and have to work a little bit harder, maybe they're more prepared to work for it on the weekends. But, ultimately, it's about putting the pieces of your puzzle together and everybody's puzzle is different. It's just important to figure out what makes you work — like how much you need to ride, how much you need to train and how to prepare yourself mentally. You've just got to sort it out for yourself."

DBR: Everyone talks about Kevin Windham having a lot of talent and then Ricky Carmichael just being such a hard worker but the way I see it, Ricky is a talented, talented guy. He can make a mistake and make up time doing it whereas Kevin shuts off when he makes a mistake. I think sometimes people mistake smooth riding for natural ability...

JW: "Yeah, I think you're right and I think sometimes

people can confuse natural talent with different riding styles. Some people are prettier on a bike — like Kevin Windham who is just so smooth and looks so good on a bike.

"I like watching Ricky Carmichael ride but just because he rides differently doesn't mean he's any less talented than Kevin Windham is. He just has a different style. He's more wide-open using the clutch to feed the power and he's hanging off the back and Kevin Windham's more about throttle control and finesse.

"Sometimes riding styles are confused in determining who has or doesn't have natural talent. I'm sure everyone's got an opinion on that but I've always just been the way I am. I've always been fairly smooth which sometimes hurts me because I think I should take more risks and I don't. It's kind of a double-edged sword because sometimes I'm sure it helps me and other times I'm sure it hurts me. Everybody's different."

DBR: Chad Reed told me that he wishes he could push more all the time and take more risks but every time he goes by a rider who's on his head he remembers why he doesn't do that...

JW: "That's one thing about being smooth and maybe not taking as many risks which is that it probably helps you keep from getting hurt a lot of times and that's a big key in our sport. A lot of people might be in a championship chase and then hurt themselves and

now they're out. It's important not to get hurt and give yourself a chance."

DBR: "You said before the season started that you really wanted to race the Lites West. Is it because almost half of those races are at Anaheim and more than half are driving distance from your house?"

JW: "Yeah! Anaheim, shoot, you sleep in your own bed, wake up, eat breakfast just like a normal day, you hang out, watch some TV, drink a cup of coffee and then it's like 'all right, well, I guess we'll cruise...'"

DBR: San Diego's the same way.

JW: "Yeah! It's easy if you live in Southern California."

DBR: This is your last year in the Lites class. By rule you have to move up next year. Does it seem daunting that you have to move up? That it's not up to you?

JW: "You know, you can look at it a couple of different ways. I'm excited about it. I enjoy riding a 450 and I have one now that I play on. I try to ride it like once a week because I'm going to have to move up at the end of the year. I enjoy riding the 450 but I do know that it's going to be harder to race. I know that. But it's exciting. It's a cool change. A lot of times change can be fun and in this situation it will be fun and it will be exciting.

"The only stressful thing is where this sport is right now with the economy and the money and everything.

It's hurting a little bit so that's a little bit of a worry but another thing is that I'm not the only one looking for a 450 ride next year. There's going to be a whole group of us in the Lites class that are going to have to move up and there are only so many 450 rides. That's why I'm putting so much pressure on myself to win because I want to have a good 450 ride. But I'm excited about it and as of right now I don't really feel nervous about it. I'm just excited to get it going. But I have plenty going on and I don't think about it all that much."

DBR: Does riding a 450 help you at all on your 250?
JW: "I don't know, it's hard to say. I can't say for sure that it helps but what is good is to be out of your element. For someone like me, I try to be smooth and cautious and not take chances so it really helps me to put myself out of my element. It's good to get used to feeling uncomfortable and being able to work through it. When I ride a 250F 99 per cent of the time when I hop on a 450 it is a lot different and I might feel a little bit uncomfortable at first so that's a good thing."

DBR: So it's good training to be able to do what you need to do on the track without needing to be completely and totally comfortable to do it...
JW: "Right, which is a little bit of what happened in Phoenix. I struggled a little bit in the Main and I wasn't comfortable and I think the more times you can make

yourself feel uncomfortable and learn to push through that and still perform, that's always a good thing. To be able to hop on the 450 on Monday morning and feel a little bit uncomfortable, that's always healthy."

DBR: Do you figure this out on your own?

JW: "Yeah, I told you before – I'm too smart for this sport."

DBR: You were on the Motocross des Nations team last year and you won the Colorado National last year which is where the MXdN is being held this year. Would you be really upset if you didn't get asked to go back this year?

JW: "Well, if I was winning races and I was the first American and I didn't get picked, yeah, I would be pretty bummed. If I'm not doing well and I'm not performing then you can't be bummed because by no means do I ever want to be part of a losing des Nations team. It's a big deal for our country – not just for the riders but for the fans. It's important that the USA is holding the Chamberlain Trophy and as a rider none of us want to let the country down. But I know it happens. Sometimes you get the bear and sometimes the bear gets you. But if I'm picked for the team I want to be picked because I'm riding well and I'm performing and because I'm the best pick. Then I'd be happy to go again."



As this issue went to press Jake lost his unbeaten record in San Francisco but he still claimed second to maintain his points lead

MONSTER MUNCH!



Jake rocks the Billy Mac 'Wurzel' look of a couple of seasons ago...

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TOPFIVEDRIVE!

HE'S BROKEN THE TOP 10 AND NOW MAX HAS SET HIS SIGHTS EVEN HIGHER...

Words by MAX ANSTIE Photo by Steve Cox

So the 2010 supercross season has rolled around and I'm sat here driving back from San Francisco after round four, reflecting on 2009. It was a good year. At the beginning of '09 I dominated the amateur scene in the schoolboy classes, turned pro, got a deal with Yamaha and have lived the dream and raced against the best in the world in American motocross.

With the New Year comes supercross. I'm 16 years old and I'm ready. I have a good bike, a good team and I have trained and worked all my life to get to where I am now. I was sat outside last night looking in at the stadium with 50,000 people inside. I had my helmet and goggles on and was warming up

for the night show. I was thinking 'wow!' Only a few years ago I would have been at the O2 Arena in the 85 class and all that work has got me ready for this. All that being nervous when you're getting ready to go out! Ha ha, I can tell you it never changes.

So, yeah, supercross has been fun and I went in and shocked the world at Anaheim 1 when I qualified second to Weimer and came out with a bang in the heat and got a solid second. Unfortunately, a few mistakes and a little bit of bad luck has kept me out of the top five in the Mains so far. But I can tell you we're doing our homework in the week and it won't be long now.

Anyway, California suffered quite a lot of

rain last week and that one week was when a few of my English buddies came over. Lil Rupe, Robbie Radiator, Bren-Dub and Johnno Big Guns just happened to come over for seven days and it rained for six of them. It was cool to have them at the supercross though, all VIP and walking around the pits.

So it's back to the drawing board this week and getting ready for San Diego. All my experiences are making me stronger and more grown up and tomorrow I have a really big day! I have to do my driving test so all you lot better be thinking about me and I'll let you know next time how it goes!

Talk to you soon...

Max

MAX POWER

Defending champ James Stewart started out strong but his season has ended prematurely

ALL CHANGE!

IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE JAMES STEWART OR CHAD REED – YET AGAIN – FOR THE 2010 AMA SUPERCROSS CROWN BUT INJURIES HAVE KO'D THE BIG GUNS AND THE YOUNG PRETENDERS HAVE RAISED THEIR GAME...

Ask anyone before the season began what the results would be after four rounds of the 2010 Monster Energy AMA SX Championship were completed and no-one – no-one – would've said "Ryan Dungey will be leading over Josh Hill, Ryan Villopoto, Andrew Short and Kevin Windham". Yet here we are almost a quarter way into the series and that's exactly the running order. So how did we get here?

JAMES STEWART

San Manuel Yamaha's James Stewart doesn't get nearly the credit he deserves for being such a tough person. He has ridden through more injuries than most people know, including more than once in his 125cc days racing an AMA National after suffering a concussion that very morning. Now it's true you can make an argument that it's not a good idea to do that – and it's not – but Stewart still won.

Well, after winning round one (barely) over Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Ryan Dungey, Stewart went into Phoenix knowing that he wasn't going to have it easy but he was prepared to do what he had to do. However, after a poor start in his heat race he cut across the track on the first lap of the heat over one of the track's two triples and inadvertently cut right into the path of Kyle Partridge who landed on Stewart and injured him. Partridge was basically okay but Stewart wasn't.

Stewart showed up for the LCQ anyway, won it and then went into the Main Event in survival mode. However, another bad start ensued and part way through the race he

and Monster Energy Kawasaki's Chad Reed got together in a right-hander and both men went down.

Never knowing what quit means Stewart got up (slowly), got on his bike and finished the race in 15th place, salvaging six valuable championship points.

And while that was pretty heroic it was nothing compared to Anaheim II which was round three of the championship. There Stewart battled it out for the lead. After leading early he was challenged by team-mate Josh Hill and Dungey and every time Stewart would lose the lead he would go out and snatch it back – even though he was obviously in tremendous pain.

After about the halfway point, though, Stewart didn't have any fight left but he still managed to hold on to third place until the finish.

After that, though, Stewart went back to the doctor and reportedly found out that he had a broken scaphoid in his right wrist that required surgery. So Stewart is out.

CHAD REED

Monster Energy Kawasaki's Chad Reed's season went even worse than Stewart's. First, at round one, Reed broke spokes in his front wheel after a bad start to the Main Event when Rockstar/Makita Suzuki's Austin Stroupe ran into him in a corner. Reed dropped out of the race, finishing 19th. However, Reed is nothing if not consistent – and that's not good in a situation like this.

In Phoenix, when he crashed with Stewart, Stewart landed on Reed's hand, breaking it. He was again credited with 19th and he's out of the 2010 championship too.



Chad Reed's out with a broken hand



Josh Hill, seen here leading Ryan Villopoto, is only 11 points off the series lead and that's without winning a Main Event



JOSH HILL

Hired as Stewart's team-mate for 2010, Josh Hill has been amazing. In the first race he 'only' managed sixth place after a horrible start. But at round two he grabbed third and at rounds three and four he was second and he says he's not even close to riding to his potential.

After four rounds Hill is sitting only 11 points out of the championship lead and he's showing a swagger he hasn't shown since he was in the amateurs. Expect Hilly to win soon.

KEVIN WINDHAM

The elder statesman of the supercross scene, 32-year-old Kevin Windham surprised the crowd at Anaheim 1 with a come-from-behind podium finish. Then, at round three, Windham actually went from outside the top 10 to fifth.

However, rounds two and four haven't been stellar with him grabbing a sixth and an 11th placed finish. When asked via text what happened to get 11th in San Francisco after setting the fastest lap time in practice Windham responded simply...


"I rode like s**t!"

RYAN VILLOPOTO

Expected to be the biggest challenger to the Reed/Stewart juggernaut, Villopoto has had his work cut out for him. At round one, after banging up his wrist in practice, Villopoto went from third to fifth in the Main Event, getting passed by Kevin Windham and Andrew Short in the late stages.

However, at Phoenix he grabbed second but then only managed seventh when the series moved back to Anaheim. When it headed north to San Francisco, though, Villopoto had something for the rest of the field and he showed it, taking advantage of a mistake by the early leader to run away with his first win of the year, moving him into third in the points.

ANDREW SHORT

Before the season began Andrew Short said what he wanted to do more than anything was to get faster. It was the raw speed he was looking for and for the most part he's found it. He has yet to finish outside the top five and on multiple occasions has sat just outside of striking distance from the podium battle. Short is faster than he was last year and this speed will start translating into some great results soon. 





WEST COAST LITES

TWO-HORSE RACE?

In the Lites class it has largely been a one-man show – so far. Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki's Jake Weimer has been pretty dominant. Through the first three rounds he won all three – as well as all of his heat races – but at San Francisco he managed to win his heat race, only to lose the Main Event.

However, after four rounds (and three wins, along with a runner-up finish) Weimer holds a commanding 16-point lead in the championship and this one is at its halfway point. No matter what happens now, Weimer only needs to finish third or better from here on out and the championship is over.

The only guy to really, seriously challenge Weimer has been GEICO Powersports Honda's Trey Canard. Canard finished a strong second at the opener before hurting his foot in his heat at Phoenix. He eventually finished seventh in that race, then turned around and grabbed third at Anaheim II before heading up to San Francisco, hoping to stop the Weimer train.

And he did. Canard started just in front of Weimer with the lead and Weimer had nothing for him. Canard pulled away to a comfortable victory over Weimer but is it too little, too late?

We'll have to see...

British interest in the Lites started strongly but has wavered a little over the last two rounds with SX debutant Tommy Searle picking up a shoulder injury that's kept him out of action. But 16-year-old Max Anstie is enjoying a great rookie season indoors and currently sits eighth in the standings. Good work Max!



Trey Canard ends Weimer's win-streak in San Francisco



"Now where's me Lucky Charms?"
RV rocks the leprechaun look!



Andrew Short's come out looking sharper and faster



'Old timer' Kevin Windham's still posting some solid results



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Even with riders as fast as Andrew Short it's been lean times for Honda over the past few seasons

H O N D A PRESSURE!

WITH JUST FIVE RACE WINS IN FIVE YEARS, THE GLORY DAYS ARE WELL AND TRULY OVER FOR BIG RED – BUT, ARGUES OUR INDUSTRY INSIDER, THEIR TIME WILL COME AGAIN...

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by STEVE COX

David Bailey, Rick Johnson, Jeff Stanton, JMB, Jeremy McGrath, Ricky Carmichael. Those are some of the greatest riders to ever grace American supercross and motocross and they have another thing in common as well. They all rode Hondas and rode the red machines very fast for many years.

Since Carmichael left the team after the 2004 season there hasn't been much to cheer about for the once dominant Honda team. Just five race wins in five years, no championships in the premier classes and, really, no sign of one coming anytime soon. In Europe it's even grimmer with one world championship in nine years. Teams such as CAS and Martin Honda have flown the flag well in recent years but it just hasn't worked for Honda across the pond. What happened to the OEM that used to just produce champion after champion?

Bailey, the winner of four titles for Honda, explains Honda early mystique this way. "It started for me with the Elsinore. Helping out at my dad's schools in the early '70s I saw so many of them. The look and sound of that bike is unforgettable. Then came Team Honda and all the guys wore those unmistakable red, white and blue jerseys. Then the 'Red Engine Type 2' works bike era really set them apart from everyone else. When I was young and hanging around the races with my dad I always wanted to go see the Hondas and was never disappointed."

Eventually, through his great rides on a privateer Kawasaki, Bailey managed to score a factory Honda ride. "My first year there was 1982 and that bike was the most radically advanced bike in MX history. The next three years were filled with more incredible works bikes, rocket 500s, trips to Japan to see incredible bikes that never made it with crazy front ends, a 250cc twin cylinder and more," he explains and brings up another example of Honda being on the cutting edge. "They were also the first in creating a testing facility when they carved out Hondaland."

So why the lack of success in recent years?

To try and trace back what happened to Honda you have to head back to the 1986 season, back when the AMA made a bold decision to implement the production rule. This started the erosion of talent heading to Honda as for many years the works bikes that HRC Japan sent over to America were vastly superior to anything that the competition were on.

The days of Honda poaching superstars like Bob Hannah, Rick Johnson and Ron Lechien were starting to slow down in 1986. Sure, riders like JMB and McGrath would still fall into their laps but the days of riders flocking over to the red team strictly for the equipment were coming to a slow halt.

"Everything was going strong until the production rule came into play in 1986 – that's when the whole thing fizzled," says Bailey. "The team members didn't get along and their run was over until they hired Carmichael." Honda essentially 'bought' Carmichael as Kawasaki didn't have the money to keep RC and for their investment Honda certainly reaped the rewards as RC won every title he was on the starting line for. A subsequent move to Suzuki for RC produced the same result which, in my opinion, says more about RC than the red team and its capabilities.

As production bikes got better and better, the rest of the OEMs caught up and the machines became less and less a factor for the riders as they shopped their services around. Honda winning five races in five years certainly isn't a case of them backing it down or not caring about being the best. They still have a big and experienced staff and they still have the high dollar trick bikes.

Some rider decisions have been curious to be sure (Tommy Hahn on a 250F?) and some looked great on paper but just didn't work out the way either party wanted it to (Ben Townley) but to write off Honda as a team that doesn't have the will to win anymore is quite a leap.

What's it like to work at Honda? Who has the actual whipping responsibilities? When I asked Shane Drew, a Honda race team member for 14 years and current head of the chassis and suspension departments, he laughs and says that it's no-one. "I've heard ever since I've been here from the outside about how much pressure Honda puts on its riders and that's not accurate at all. It can't be any more pressure than any other factory team and I think every rider puts a ton of pressure on themselves because they're on factory Honda. That's where pressure, if there is any, comes from in my opinion."

"For sure the goal is to win, that's why we all do it and everyone works hard all week in order to do that. What we try to do at Honda is surround the riders and crew members with the best people in the

industry and everyone learns from each other to try and come up with the best solution for whatever problem the rider has with the bike. Having said that, when we go into our meetings we all see the #1 plates from every title they've won since 1973 on the wall. We all have a sense of the history of winning that Honda has had over the years."

The last two years Chad Reed has been on the market and available for hire and he's ridden everything but red. During James Stewart's undefeated MX season a few years back it was no secret he was leaving Kawasaki at the end of the year. Here was Honda's chance to get the premier talent in the sport who was at the peak of his abilities and they weren't interested. They were even primarily backed by Stewart's personal sponsor of choice – Red Bull – and the union didn't happen.

When asked how Honda can get back to dominance, Drew's take on it is the rider makes the team. "I think that we all know that in this sport the rider is huge. When we had RC and [Kevin] Windham a few years back we won every national and supercross. No-one was calling me and asking me about the pressure then!"

Bailey's take on what will get Honda back to being the premier team in the pits is simple – they need to win. "Marty Smith won. The powerhouse teams of the '80s won. Carmichael won. They don't win anymore and the bike no longer stands out. If they hired Stewart and he spent the rest of his career there surpassing McGrath's record and developed a new bike and rode outdoors with a team-mate he could take under his wing to continue on winning after he retired it would help but the fact is it would take several more Stewarts to make it like it once was."

If Honda ever sign one of the big two [Reed or Stewart] then they can win consistently. It's that simple. And with homegrown youngsters like Trey Canard and Justin Barcia coming up through on the GEICO Honda squad, maybe they will end up just finding their Ryan Dungey or Ryan Villopoto...

So really, like a lot of things in the sport, it boils down to the rider. There is no doubt that Honda has the equipment, the personnel and the resources to be on top again. They aren't going away and history certainly suggests that the winged ones will emerge again as the best once more.



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NO LIMIT!

CAN DAVID KNIGHT BATTLE BACK FROM THE BRINK OF DISASTER TO OVERCOME THE BAD GUYS, WIN THE RACE AND GET THE GIRL JUST LIKE HIS BANJOLELE-PLAYING RACING HERO GEORGE SHUTTLEWORTH?

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY SUTTY

As well as being a classic slice of British cinematography, George Formby's 1936 movie *No Limit* is David Knight's favourite film ever and believe it or not the reason behind why the two-time world and two-time GNCC champ will be running the #14 this year in the World Enduro Championship (it's the very same number the movie's hero wins the TT with).

Like most movies with a sporting theme *No Limit* follows a familiar formula – an underdog (George Formby in *No Limit*'s case) rises through the ranks and has some success before falling foul of a dramatic plot twist or two. After reassessing the situation our hero then enters

into a strenuous training montage before coming out of the other end victorious in a heart-warming finale. Hee hee – it's turned out nice again!

By comparison Knighter's story is far from over even though he's tasted sweeter success than most of us ever will and he's already bagged the uber-hot babe. In fact, after the dramatic plot twist that was his disastrously disappointing move to the BMW factory team, the 31-year-old's currently mid-montage and working hard to rebuild his career for what he hopes will be a happy ending with KTM. We caught up with DK in Spain as he prepares for what could be a make or break year for the hefty M+M loving Manxman...

>>



© Marcelo Maragni/Bull Photofiles



*This time 12 months ago
Knighter was getting
ready for his WEC campaign
aboard a BMW...*

DK feels at home on the 530EXC – "the bigger bikes have more grunt in them and that's what I'm all about..."



DBR: It's little over 12 months since you signed with BMW. Back then did you honestly ever think you'd ever be back racing a KTM in the WEC?

DK: "I never say never but I definitely didn't think I'd be back with KTM so soon. I went to BMW to try and make it work and the plan was to win the world championship on that bike but it didn't quite happen that way so I'm back on an orange bike again."

DBR: But when we spoke pre-season last year you were convinced it was a winner...

DK: "The bike felt different but, yeah, I thought it was still good enough to win. In pre-season testing I knew I was faster than Juha Salminen at the majority of tracks we rode on and when you're faster than Juha you know you're not far off. The trouble is we were all on the new bike and we were all going slow! We didn't test with anyone else so until the season actually started we didn't know we were a long way off."

DBR: So at what point did you first become aware then that maybe everything wasn't so rosy?

DK: "The first British championship round gave me some idea how much we were struggling. I was riding really hard but the times just weren't coming. I was riding well, the Breckland going suits me down to the ground and I wasn't making any mistakes so it was strange that I was only just faster than some of the guys."

"From there we went to Portugal for the opening round of the WEC and on the Extreme test I was fastest one lap by something like 20 seconds but that still wasn't enough to get a decent result because on the faster tests I was losing half-a-minute and more – in fact

all the BMW riders were."

DBR: How does a champion like yourself mentally cope with going from being a winner to knowing it's actually not possible to win at all?

DK: "It was hard but after that race I had to make some adjustments inside my head and instead of going for the win we had to try and make the bike competitive over the rest of the year. The trouble was there were just so many politics involved. We couldn't just do what common sense dictates and make changes that in my own mind I knew would make the bike better – it wasn't as easy as that."

"I knew that the bike wouldn't be as good as a KTM but I thought we'd be able to make it competitive. I've always really enjoyed testing and playing about with settings to find what works and what doesn't so I relished the challenge. I concentrated on trying to make the bike work but ideas I had were shot down by the engine and frame engineers at the factory. In the end it was like we were banging our heads against a brick wall so at that point it's when I decided enough was enough – I couldn't sit there for two years riding something that wasn't going to change."

DBR: So you leave BMW, buy your own Kawasaki and go racing with that until the whole PBM deal is built around you – how did that all work out?

DK: "The Kawi enabled me to prove that I could still win but at the end of the day no matter how good that bike was set up or prepared it was still a motocross bike and wasn't at all ideal when compared to a proper enduro bike. It was good in some areas but in real slippery enduro going it

was a bit of a struggle. But after jumping off the multi-million pound factory BMW and riding a bike that's probably worth about seven grand winning again was definitely a big relief."

DBR: But despite the success with Kawasaki you really wanted to be back on a KTM again...

DK: "I've always got on well with the people at KTM so when I expressed an interest in riding one again there was a ride there for me. Obviously there was a bit of shuffling had to be done and things are financially tight at the minute so it wasn't easy but Fabio Farioli was adamant that he wanted me back on a KTM and I wanted to be back on one too."

"At the end of the day there's not many people still making a 500 and KTM have a great bike ready to go. I still love riding 450s but the bigger bikes have more grunt in them and that's what I'm all about – the 530EXC suits me down to the ground."

DBR: Do you feel fortunate to be back?

DK: "Of course. When I left KTM I knew I was leaving the best team, a lot of people say I left on bad terms but that's rubbish – I left on good terms with everyone. They could have said that they didn't want me back and that would have been a bit ***t for me really but I've learnt a lesson. I was happy with KTM and I only jumped ship to try and do some other things but I've come back now. I could have stayed at BMW and got a hell of a lot of money over the two or three years and just tossed it off for that time basically but I'm not like that – money doesn't motivate me. People think that I only went to BMW for the money but if they knew how much money I'm on now riding at KTM they'd understand me a little bit better... It's just one of those things."



DBR: So is it safe to assume the BMW break-up gave you a bit of a kicking financially?

DK: "When I left KTM I was on about the same amount of money I was offered to go to BMW. The KTM deal I have now... Well, I'm just glad to be on a good bike with good people around me so I can enjoy my riding and have some fun – I'm also lucky that I have some great personal sponsors like Red Bull."

DBR: But you still seem quite happy?

DK: "Yeah, I think everything is falling back into place again now. It's taken a while to adjust to WEC-style competition after racing in the States but I feel like I'm getting there. I know I'm not going to dominate like I did in 2006 – that was just one of those perfect years after I spent 2004 and '05 developing the bike. I've been riding this bike a lot in America so I really feel at home on it and by the end of the year I want to be dominant again."

DBR: Who do you see as being your main threat in the E3 class of the WEC?

DK: "I think Christophe Nambotin. Having him in my class will be a good thing because we'll push each other on. He was real good at the end of last year and looked a lot like I did in '06 – he was riding real smooth. He looks at home on the 300cc two-stroke and I think he'll be very quick again this year but I know I can beat him. I'm looking forward to it – I just need to concentrate and keep improving. The world championship is the biggest thing and my main aim is to win that."

DBR: You're 32 at the end of May – how much longer do you think can you race at the top level and when you're done with the WEC what's next?

DK: "I feel as good as I did about seven or eight years ago. I'm always improving and I don't think you ever stop learning. If I'm enjoying my riding I know I can win and that was half the problem last year – no fun. I want to win one more world title at least and then I'd like to go do some fun races – the real tough extreme enduros, the odd WEC round and some more American stuff too. The big thing for the immediate future is the world championship though – I need at least another title!"



KNIGHTER'S FIGHT!

DK TAKES ON TB!

For some years now Knighter has been the #1 extreme enduro rider in the world, stamping his authority all over events such as the Erzberg Rodeo, Last Man Standing, The Tough One and the Indoor Enduro World Cup. But in the last couple of seasons a new name has been breaking through the ranks and it's rumoured that there's no love lost between Knighter and the new prince of extreme – Taddy Blazusiak – but according to DK that's all bull.

"Taddy and I get on just fine. He's employed by KTM to do the extreme races and he's a specialist at those coming from a trials background. The rumours about us not getting on all started with that whole Vegas thing which was blown out of all proportion by the Yanks. Everyone thinks I launched my bike but I'm telling you now that if I wanted to hit him I definitely wouldn't have missed."

"That whole series was a cock up. I didn't get paid a penny by KTM for doing it so at Vegas where there was a 50 grand bonus on the line I asked Kurt Nicoll what the score was – 'is it every man for himself or are the KTM guys gonna help me win that bonus?'"

"He told me that everyone was going to back me up and at the start everyone was spot on. Lafferty and Nate all pushed everyone wide in turn one and I was away. Anyway, after a few laps I started getting rammed from behind and I thought he was just messing about and so I let him past thinking he'd slow down on the last lap and let me have the win but he never."

"The hardest thing to deal with was Kurt's lack of support – he told me it was all sorted when it wasn't. The annoying thing is that I know that if I'd had to race for it – if it was every man for himself – I could have won it. If I could re-live that race I'd definitely do things different. At the time I was annoyed but not so much with Taddy – it was more miscommunication on Kurt's part. I learnt a big lesson from that – if you want to win it, pin it – you've got to win them for yourself."

"I get on great with Taddy now. He's bringing the level of competition up in extreme events and at the indoors and I still love racing them [DK splashed out five grand on his own bike to race in the final IEWC round at Barcelona] and I know I can still beat him at them. I'm not too serious when it comes to racing those events – if I win it's good for me and bad for Taddy."



The big Manxman's gunning for WEC title #3 in 2010



Giuseppe Luongo



STAYING ALIVE!

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP MOTOCROSS HAS SURVIVED A TROUBLED 2009 BUT IT'S IN 2010 – AND BEYOND – WHEN WE'LL REALLY START TO FEEL THE EFFECTS OF THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC MELTDOWN...

WORDS BY ADAM WHEELER

Last year saw the FIM Motocross World Championship partially negotiate the consequences of global economic erosion. With the imminent 2010 series staunchly pegged at 15 rounds and the Motocross des Nations set for another transatlantic hop, we decided to take another look at the health of the sport via the people in charge of moving the key pieces around the board...

For many manufacturers the writing was on the wall for their racing efforts late in 2008 as soon as the realisation dawned that customers would no longer be swinging through the dealership doors with credit cards prepped. But budgets inked earlier in 2008 for 2009 ensured that the pinch was not too painful and the only evidence of a crisis was visible in the weighty preoccupations of those gazing towards the future. Attendances appeared to rise, new sponsors were apparent, new deals were signed with federations and circuits, new motorcycles were unveiled and the MXdN was locked up until the year 2013.

But for the reality of where motocross finds itself in the current economic world, 2010 and possibly a radically-scheduled 2011 are more likely to be wiser indicators. And behind the gloss of a 'successful' 2009 season there has been a process of down-sizing for almost all involved – teams with budgets, riders with salaries and, one of the most important areas, manufacturers with their levels of investment.

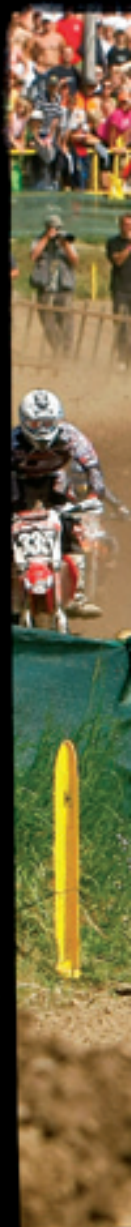
Manufacturers have cut overheads ('reduced operational budget') to reduce the burden of fallen profit and shareholder concern. Most are optimistically anticipating a slight increase in

sales by the end of 2010 but the outlook is mainly gloomy so the hacking of staff (KTM dumped their road racing arm, Honda closed their Spanish plant and Yamaha made redundancies in Europe and the US) and switching off the assembly lines have become commonplace. But all the marques are still present within GP motocross.

"At the end of 2008, early 2009, only quick decisions could be made," reveals Yamaha Motor Europe Racing Division Manager Laurens KleinKoerkamp, overseer of the last two MX1 world champions. "With contractual and other commitments being done for 2009, pulling out was a rather drastic option and therefore severe budget saving instead of budget cuts was the choice often made. But very few manufacturers are prepared to make long-term racing commitments since."

"Honda still race the championship but we make our biggest investment in the quality of the product so what used to be a straight-forward racing budget is now used in different areas," says Honda Motor Europe Off-Road Co-ordinator Roger Harvey.

Kawasaki have inflated their French-owned factory team with GP winner Jonathan Barragan coming into the green set-up.



"It's more to do with ensuring the team always has at least two official riders under the awning," comments Kawasaki's European Race Planning Manager Steve Guttridge. "It will definitely continue to face review."

Suzuki have been able to keep two works riders and integrate the exceptional talents of Ken Roczen further into the Geboers' Belgian operation thanks to the hefty title sponsorship of Teka Group. "We can say that since 2009, TEKA has become a basic number one partner," says Teka Suzuki World MX1 and GRP (Geboers Racing Promotion) Principal Sylvain Geboers. "Without TEKA or a sponsor of the same calibre it will not be possible to participate in the world championship. Without sponsor support it will not be possible to run a team on our level and without manufacturer support GRP shall never run a team in grand prix."

KTM boast a six-rider squad – importantly with world champion Tony Cairoli and a new 350cc model – and have a slightly unique position thanks to their exceptionally strong motocross roots and their role as a sponsor of the series. "Our factory team budget is

smaller than before but because of the riders we have we were able to increase our sponsorship money a bit," remarks Off-Road Director Pit Beirer. "We have strong partners for this project so we are okay, even though it is still a big effort with six factory riders. I think we are the strongest off-road brand and we know this is our core business. We had painful cuts on the road racing segment but we had to set priorities and there was never a question mark about our attention to motocross, enduro and rally."

"The fact that they are still there means that motocross is still important for them to be able to sell off-road bikes," believes Youthstream President Giuseppe Luongo of the factories' continued involvement. "The future of our sport regarding finance for the teams and riders is not via the manufacturers but via international sponsors and this is why we work with the media, TV, internet, infrastructure and in general bringing the MXGPs truly worldwide. This will save the future of the teams and riders because manufacturers will reduce more and more their budgets – it's a shame but it is like this."





TESTING TIMES

IS DEVELOPMENT KEY? >>

The relatively cheap costs of racing motocross and the freedom of technological innovation is a major attraction for brands. It is also partly the reason that companies like the Piaggio Group-owned Aprilia, BMW-owned Husqvarna and small factories like TM and CCM get involved. "It's the hardest test-bed for development," says Guttridge, "with long motos and many various styles of track and conditions to adapt to."

But late last year the FIM banned the use of active suspension and there are fears among manufacturers that more restrictions could arrive – the likes of which are currently choking sports like MotoGP.

"We always ask manufacturers if a technical change would make racing any better or just more expensive," explains FIM MX Commission President Wolfgang Srb. "The fans want a true and honest sport – 'a man and a bike' – this is why motocross is so successful. I do not see any danger that manufacturers lose interest. There was – and will always be – room for engineers and technical development."

"For instance, electric bikes need to be developed – there is a lot of work to do. What we simply do not want is that costs explode, that the bikes become just affordable for a limited and privileged few."

This approach is not without its pitfalls though argues Harvey. "Our understanding is that most of the decisions from the FIM are made to try to limit costs as well as improve safety but, for example, what if they had decided three years ago that fuel injection was to be banned? Where would we be in 2010? The fact is that the fuel injection systems of today can be manufactured more economically than a carburettor. The FIM have to be really careful with what they restrict and when."

Youthstream support the unanimous view on this one. "For world championship level we have to find the right compromise between the development of technology and the cost," says Luongo. "We have the perfect balance in motocross which is maybe not the case for many other sports."

The emphasis placed on the FIM and their intentions with the rulebook could also affect the short-term future of the series at a time when validation is the key to racing existence. "Technical development is one of the main reasons for us to be involved," says KleinKoerkamp. "It is important to maintain to a large extent the prototype regulations as this gives us the possibility to justify being there also for development reasons."

"Remember also that a big advantage GPs currently have over the AMA series is the technological freedom," adds Harvey. And that's something that could be a deciding factor for manufacturers' future budgets if teams go global from 2011.





Roger Harvey



THE TEAMS

STANDING FIRM >>

At the centre of the sport are the teams. Their participation is crucial but they mainly do so in 2010 with less resources and harder commercial prospects. Opinions across the board of the people we spoke to credited the excellent level of organisation, presentation and exposure that the grands prix now have, accepting that they are a viable shop window for sponsors and other backers.

And GPs need to be – the demands of being a GP outfit have challenged the teams themselves to become independent solvent forces, able to exist without the need of a sugar daddy or solely reliant on manufacturers' coins. The conditions in 2010 are incredibly harsh and the ability of teams to endure – and the depth of GP racing itself – will be tested in the coming seasons.

"2010 will be worse than 2009 for many but I'm sure that this will make the difference between the professional and the amateur," thinks Team Martin Honda Sport Co-ordinator Lorenzo Resta. "Now if you want to compete at the top level you need a Team Manager, a press agent, a photographer, some good technicians, electronics and mechanics but at the same time the cost of a season here remains lower compared to other motorsports. Is not easy to make ends meet but we need to improve from our side skills in the world of commerce."

COST CUTS

MAKING ENDS MEET >>

When teams are forced to cut costs they're always going to look towards one of their biggest outlays for savings – the riders and their contracts.

"That has been a very painful experience for me over the last 12 to 15 months," says Beirer. "We really had to cut back salaries or ask riders to reduce things like travel costs. Personally I know the risks they take and the work they put in so it was tough to ask them. We have tried to make the best of the situation by trimming where we could. Everybody has had to give something, including the riders."

"Most riders are down 50 per cent for 2010 but in some cases this is because of the rider himself or his management," reckons GP winner and new Aprilia representative Josh Coppins. "I honestly believe if the rider is good and has a good group around him, he or she will still be doing well. You need to be a good athlete, not only a good racer. Under 'athlete' fall many things – good with sponsors, testing, fitness and image."

The issue of a rider's worth increasing with any extra financial incentive he can bring – generally accepted for a number of years now in F1 and MotoGP – is still a delicate matter in motocross. "First and foremost," says Coppins, "if you ask any team manager what he wants – a rider with a sponsor/money or a rider that will work hard and get results while portraying a good image for your team – then 90 per cent will take the latter. Being marketable is important but still the factory teams want to win."

"We increased the bonus for the results as the sponsors have made with us, so if you do your job well then you gain," says Resta. "We can't accept to sign a rider only if he brings sponsors or money. This is unimaginable if you manage a factory team. We have to consider the talent and then the image."





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IT'S A MUDDER!

NEVER SAY DIE...

"With the economy as it is we're not out of the woods yet so we have to view 2010 as a year where we keep pushing," says former GP racer Harvey. "You know, like a mud race. It's a hard grind, some fall, some go back to the pits, others just keep grinding away and eventually achieve something. That is the way we have to treat 2010."

"Our thoughts are that the economy will only improve a little during 2010 and that 2011 will remain tough but we're very confident with our business position so we're already looking hard at the next five years – not just 2011."

NEW HORIZONS

TO BOLDLY GO...

The world championship will travel out of Europe only once in 2010 but this could change in 2011 with the plan to start the series in late May. This will happen in a bid to attract American teams and riders who have just finished SX and fancy picking the GPs over the AMA Nationals.

"The big step will be in 2011 when we start with the new programme," says Luongo. "Already from 2011 we will have four overseas events including the USA. In 2009 many companies cut their employees, we employed 10 more people. It's in the difficult moments that we can make the difference, I believe MXGP will win space due to this crisis."

"As a factory I think it is a great idea but we must see if it is possible," remarks Beirer. "Once the press conference and announcement is made then I think we will be able to see the true reaction and the level of interest from the Americans. I think the plan will either start or stop with them."

"At this moment I can't judge if the Americans are open for this," says KleinKoerkamp. "I don't know if they see any advantage in such a programme compared to their current outdoors schedule. I foresee a problem if it means the high travel costs for the non-European events have to be borne by the teams without compensation. I hope we get the possibility to study and discuss it first rather than it being pushed through."

Guttridge sees the value. "When the US team comes to the MX des Nations you can see and feel the extra interest it creates in every area." He also points out the possible ramifications for the GP teams faced with the extra hike. "We have no objection to teams travelling all around the globe if that's where the promoter wants to put the show on but if the teams and their riders can't afford to turn up then there is no show."





BATTLE OF BRITAIN!

FOR TWO WEEKENDS AT THE END OF JANUARY TOP MOTO-PILOTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD CAME TO SCRAP IT OUT IN THE BRITISH SUPERCROSS CHAMPIONSHIPS – HERE ARE SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS...

By Suttly, Andrew Wiley and Chris Hudson

After a short break over the festive period the Future West supercross series resumes with rounds three and four that are held at Liverpool's Echo Arena and the O2 in London. With the championship chases heating up – unlike the sub-zero temperatures outside – a healthy number of race fans come out to the two venues.

While UK supercross doesn't quite pack the same punch and panache as its US counterpart there's no denying that for our miniscule by comparison arenas the formula seems about right. Each night brings plenty of racing for spectators to see in a three-hour plus programme that packs in plethora of heats, LCQs and finals plus oddities like the dash-for-cash head-to-head sprints that have proved popular with both riders and fans. But enough of the talkin' – let's get on with the action...

LIVERPOOL

The big news surrounding round three in Liverpool is the absence of defending SX1 and SX2 champ Mike Brown who apparently rocked up at rounds one and two with less than satisfactory paperwork. While the ACU financially punish the champ and give him a little slap on the wrists it seems that the AMA take the matter a lot less lightly and they suspend the veteran star for a 60-day period. It seems the 37-year-old's British supercross farewell tour just got a little shorter.

Other Stars and Stripers MIA are UTAG Yamaha's Zach Osborne and Samsung star Ben LaMay both of whom give the third and fourth rounds of the UK supercross season a miss either because of injury or fear of it...

But the missing stars are quickly forgotten about as

promoter John Hellam plays a blinder and brings in 2004 FIM SX world champion Heath Voss on a PAR Honda and homeboy Scuba Steve Clarke to spice things up. Armed with a potentially-prepped MVR-D Suzuki the 2005 85cc world champion who's now a rising AMA star – and finished an amazing 10th in his rookie season in the East Coast Lites series last year – starts as favourite on the night, especially with the 4,000-strong crowd who are packed into the Echo Arena.

And he gives 'em plenty to cheer about at the start of the British Open Final too as he drives in deep to turn one and shoves series leader Gordon Crockard and the rest of the pack way out wide and into the Tuff Blocks. By the time Crockard's powered free of the foam bales and found a way past a hard-charging James Dodd to wrestle away the runner-up spot Scuba Steve has eked out enough of a lead to secure the win.

While the Ulsterman increases his points lead he's far from happy. "Did you see all that in the first turn?" he asks later. "I felt that I was first going in but on the exit I got ridden into by someone. I can appreciate that it's difficult for some people to steer their bikes where they want them to go but this felt very deliberate. I ended up off the track and down in fifth place instead of in the lead – I'm not impressed!"

For the double pro points leader Colton Facciotti Liverpool sees more success come his way as he makes it three wins from three starts in the SX2 championship before finishing runner-up in the SX1 class behind series debutante Voss. The guest PAR Honda rider is awesome to watch around the Echo Arena circuit as he lays down the awesome power of the 450cc Honda to devastating effect to beat Colt n' Clarkey 'cross the line in the Open Class Main to put an end to an awesome night of racing. >>

Canucks Colton Facciotti
(#21) and Kyle Beaton
head the pack in Liverpool



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FOX SHIFT KTM

Scuba Steve Clarke makes a pair of very popular appearances in Liverpool and London



QUICKIE QUESTION TIME

FIVE MINUTES WITH STEVEN CLARKE

Interview by Andrew Wiley

Flying in from the States for rounds three and four of the Future West series is rising AMA star Steven Clarke who finished a fighting 10th in last year's East Coast Lites SX class. The 2005 85cc world champion who was born and bred in Stourbridge is a real favourite with UK race fans who've been following his progress Stateside and Scuba Steve appreciates the opportunity to race on home soil too...

DBR: How does it feel to be back racing in the UK?

SC: "I'm absolutely loving it! It's just great to have all my family and friends come and see me race and it's great to have the home crowd behind me too. I just love having everyone cheering me on to do well and it just seems to bring my racing up to another level."

DBR: How does the British SX series compare to racing in the US?

SC: "To be honest it's worlds apart. The crowds can be up to 60,000 and they really love their supercross – the arenas are huge and it allows them to build amazing tracks. Also a lot more riders show up to race. It's still great to come and race in the Future West series though, there's good close racing and it's just good fun to race on home ground."

DBR: What are your thoughts on the tracks?

SC: "They're a bit small and the ruts get quite deep but yeah the tracks are okay – they're built good because the guys who design and build them are the best!"

DBR: How are you getting on with the bike that's been loaned to you?

SC: "It's taken some getting used to but MVR-D have done a great job on the bike. We've made a lot of changes to the bike to suit me – like making it as light as possible so if it's not needed we have taken stuff off or drilled it to get the weight down. The bike has got a good strong fast motor too with lots of punch – I love it!"



Spencer Knowles throws out some badass breakdancing moves in Liverpool

LONDON

A distance of seven days and 233 miles separates round three in Liverpool from the final tour stop in London. The capital city's O2 Arena is one of the newest and definitely most impressive indoor venues in the UK and as such it's a fitting host for the Future West finale.

Dirt Wurx use every inch of the arena floor to lay out one of the most interesting and technical tracks of the year. With softer than preferred soil the circuit ruts up quite badly too making it even tougher for the riders.

With a big lead in both pro championships Facciotti doesn't need to push himself too hard on the rough and tough racetrack. After suffering poor starts in the Main Events Colt only finishes on the podium once all night and that's in the Pro SX1 division where he trails home behind Crockard and Voss – the only two guys riding true Open Class machines – to take the title.

In the SX2 class it's a truly international trio of stars who stand on the podium at the end of the final. While David Goosen has a fairly uneventful ride to third the battle for the win between Frenchman Cedric Soubeyras and our very own Scuba Steve goes all the way to the flag with Clarke snatching it from under the nose of the Gallic crusader while Colt finishes fourth to seal the deal in the points chase once more.

And there's another win for Clarke in the British Open class as he takes his second domestic series victory in as many weeks when he powers home the MVR-D Suzuki ahead of Goosen and Bristolian Joe Dark. Series leader Crockard has a few problems on the night but still easily picks up the title by finishing in fourth position.

"I got pipped at the post last year so I wanted to get justice for that by winning this year's title," says Gordy. "I think the most important value in

winning the championship is to pay back the Paul Bird Motorsport Kawasaki Team for giving me the tools to get the job done. Not a lot of people are giving me chances anymore but PBM were different and backed me better than I could have asked for."

It's a particularly sweet win for Crockard who'll start the 2010/11 series in his home venue – the Odyssey Arena in Belfast. "I'm going to be so proud to roll out into that packed stadium running the number #1 plate – I honestly can't wait!" And to be honest neither can we. British supercross may have its doubters and cynics and in all honesty it's far from being perfect but over the course of the last few months the series has thrilled around 15,000 fans and given over 200 riders a national championship to chase at a time of year when the sport almost stops outside – whether you're a fan of indoor racing or not the Future West series is definitely something to be applauded.



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THE (UNOFFICIAL) SX AWARDS

RIDER OF THE SERIES >>

There's no denying that Colton Facciotti has been the class act of the '09/'10 FWSX season and he's dominated like never before. There was a time in the not-so-distant past where you could guarantee that Colt would end up on his ear in almost every race but the 21-year-old two-time Canadian champ has matured into a well rounded racer.

SPORTSMAN OF THE SERIES >>

This one's a toss up between Kyle Beaton and young gun Ross Clarke but for very different reasons... K-Beats impressed many at round two in the NEC when he was the only pro who slowed down for the waved yellows after a marshal got tagged during a heat race. Ross is the kind of kid who's not backwards in coming forwards when a fellow racer needs to borrow bits or a complete bike as was the case with Joe Dark in Liverpool. It's good to see sportsmanship is still alive and well in this very competitive environment.

VENUE OF THE SERIES >>

You can't beat London's O2 when it comes to creating an awesome atmosphere. Also, the spectator facilities are fantastic with comfy seating, good lighting and a stellar sound system while outside of the arena there are a whole heap of great eateries all under the one – albeit massive – roof.

CHAMP CHAT!

A QUICK CONVO WITH COLTON FACCIOTTI

Interview by Andrew Wiley

Colton Facciotti has been a familiar face on the UK supercross scene since 2004 when as a throttle-happy 15-year-old he rocked up with compatriot Kyle Beaton who actually shares the exact same DoB as Colton.

Since first arriving on our shores Colt's won a whole heap of Main Events and a Future West championship or two and so it's understandable that he's now one of the more popular imported riders with UK fans. We caught up with the quiet but very likeable Yamaha star after he wrapped up both the SX1 and SX2 titles in the O2 Arena.

DBR: How's this years SX series been for you?

CF: "It's been good – I have tried to be consistent and to ride well."

DBR: Do you enjoy the British races?

CF: "It's been a great series this year. I always look forward to riding over here but the weather sucks. The crowds are always really great though..."

DBR: Out of all the arenas we have been to for this year's championship which one have you enjoyed the most?

CF: "I really enjoyed the NEC rounds because we got to do the demonstration rides during the day and the crowds really got behind us – plus it gave us more track time."

DBR: You ride team UTAG Yamahas while you're here in the UK – have you missed racing your team-mate Zach Osborne since his crash at the NEC?

CF: "For sure. Zach's a great racer and it was a real blow when he crashed so early on in the championship and got hurt but the good news is he's recovering well now."

DBR: Finally, congratulations on your double championship victory...

CF: "Hey thanks! It has been a great series and the tracks and crowds have been great too. I love racing in England and I can't wait to come back for the next one."

Former world SX champ
Heath Voss is in a class
of his own



RESULTS

FINAL SERIES STANDINGS

SX1 >>

1 Colton Facciotti 87 points, 2 Gordon Crockard 73,
3 Ryan Blizzard 63, 4 Heath Voss 50,
5 David Goosen 50, 60 Mike Brown 45

SX2 >>

1 Colton Facciotti 93 points, 2 Kyle Beaton 69,
3 Ryan Blizzard 58, 4 David Goosen 54,
5 Spencer Knowles 49, 6 Steven Clarke 47

BRITISH OPEN >>

1 Gordon Crockard 81 points, 2 James Dodd 66,
3 Danny Tollet 61, 4 Ashley Greedy 55,
5 Steven Clarke 50, 6 David Goosen 47

The Crock Star grabs
himself another
national crown



Super stylish Supermini
supremo Bradley Ward



RESULTS

FINAL SERIES STANDINGS >>

AUTOS

1 Lewis Thomas 95 points, 2 James Scott 82,
3 Daniel Breen 80, 4 Reagan Brooks 74,
5 Jaydon Murphy 63, 6 Ryan Allison 51

65cc

1 Conrad Mewse 100 points, 2 Albie Wilkie 84,
3 Connor Hughes 84, 4 Dylan Woodcock 68,
5 Troy Willerton 62, 6 Harry Kimber 61

85cc

1 Chubbie Hammond 89 points, 2 Scooter Webster 67,
3 Gradie Featherstone 65, 4 Sid Evans 60,
5 Tom Neal 56, 6 Max Acres 52

SUPERMINI

1 Bradley Ward 87 points, 2 Tom Neal 85,
3 Corie Southwood 74, 4 Chubbie Hammond 56,
5 Chris Bayliss 51, 6 Adam Darbyshire 48

YOUTH LITES

1 Matt Bayliss 100 points, 2 Luke Norris 80,
3 Ryan Williams 66, 4 Christy Harnett 63,
5 Mark Perfect 62, 6 David Sweet 57

CLUBMAN LITES

1 Matt Bayliss 82 points, 2 Chad Yarranton 66,
3 Jason Varnham 60, 4 Rowan Hill 55,
5 Christy Harnett 54, 6 Aaron Jenner 41

CLUBMAN OPEN

1 Tommy Fenwick 66 points, 2 Carl Jones 66,
3 Chad Yarranton 64, 4 Alex Smith 57,
5 Mark Perfect 57, 6 Christy Harnett 51

QUADS

1 Giles Davies 87 points, 2 Oliver Sansom 76,
3 Mark Watson 75, 4 Paul Broomhead 74,
5 Liam Carter 52, 6 Richard Tordoff 35

Quads!



AM-SLAM!

THE FUTURE WEST SUPERCROSS SERIES ISN'T JUST ABOUT BIG MONEY PROS AND THE MAJORITY OF RACERS ARE ACTUALLY PAY-TO-PLAY AMATEURS AGED SIX AND UPWARDS...

While most of the fan focus is on the pro racers at the FWSX series it's always worth remembering that the youth and amateurs are scrapping it out for British championship titles too. And when there are national championships up for grabs you can guarantee the action's gonna come thick and fast.

After a slow start to the series – if you can call third place a slow start – Lewis Thomas comes alive at the second of the NEC rounds to win the Auto class main event and then each and every one of the remaining rounds. Almost equally as consistent – running 5-2-2-2 – throughout the series is championship runner-up James Scott who just edges out Daniel Breen to the silver medal position. Six points shy of the third placed rider is round one winner Reagan Brooks who after slipping to fourth at NEC 2 also podiums in Liverpool with a third before slipping back to 10th in London – his inconsistency costs him dear in the final series standings.

Conrad Mewse won pretty much everything there was to win in the 65cc class last year and he keeps his run of good form steaming along through the supercross series too. Four wins from four show the pack who's boss. The same three riders hog the podium all year and with Mewse claiming the top step throughout it's Albie Wilkie and Connor Hughes who trade seconds and thirds. With a pair of each apiece the final positions are settled by the better last race rule which means Wilkie takes second with Hughes third.

After winning the first two rounds of the series in the SW85 class Red Bull KTM UK's Ben Watson is a no-show for rounds three and four meaning Chubbie Hammond takes over out front as virtual points leader. And after finishing second in Scouseville and winning in the O2 it's little Chubbie who seals the deal by a massive 22 points! Second in the points chase is SX specialist Scooter Webster whose 2-7-4-8 scorecard outscores Gracie Featherstone's 9-3-7-7 by a mere two points – close or what! A special mention has to go to round three winner Tom Neal who'd have surely run top three in the series if only he hadn't DNFed round two in Birmingham!

In fact if the Motoshack rider hadn't have had such an off night in the NEC young Neal might well have stolen the show in the Supermini division too rather than missing out on the championship title by just two points! The big winner in this class is Pontefract's Bradley Ward who bullies the pack into submission on both nights at the NEC before crashing back to sixth in Liverpool. With a five-point lead over Neal heading into the O2 finale all Ward has to do is finish third or better – if Neal wins – so when it's all done and dusted a sneaky second easily

secures the title for the Sturm-sponsored speedster!

Dominant is the best way to describe Matt Bayliss' season in the youth Open Class as like Mewse in the 65s he goes four for four to take maximum points. Okay, there's a little controversy surrounding round two but let's not take anything away from Matt – he rode fast and smart all year and as well as winning the Youth Lites crown snatches the Clubman Lites class title as well. Second overall in the Youth Lites class is Luke Norris who in his first year in the 250F division did a stellar job to run 2-3-5-2. KTM-mounted Ryan Williams secures third in the series after placing on the podium in the final two rounds.

Coming in to the '09/'10 season as double champ Chad Yarranton definitely started as favourite to lift the amateur titles again. With two wins in the NEC Chad has a healthy lead at the halfway stage of the series but a fifth in the Echo Arena and a no-score in the O2 sees Bayliss snatch victory. Third in the final series standings is Suzuki privateer Jason Varnham. Jason has trained with Stefan Elvin at his Perris-based MX Heaven facility and it really shows as he's one of the most stylish riders in the class. Despite only riding three out of four rounds, three thirds are enough to put Varnham in third in the final points tally ahead of Kent teenager Rowan Hill.

Inconsistency leaves the way wide open for teenager Tommy Fenwick to steal the Amateur Open Class title. After missing round one completely Fenwick wins the second and third rounds to set up an awesome season finale. Heading in to the O2 Yarranton leads the series on 53, Carl Jones is second one point back, Fenwick's third on 50 and Mark Perfect's just one behind Tommy so there are just four points separating the first four riders.

Unbelievably, none of the title contenders finish on the podium in London as Bayliss beats Ed Briscoe and Ryan Williams across the line and Racer MX's Ross Clarke takes fourth. The first of the series contenders to cross the line is Fenwick in fifth, Jones is sixth while Yarranton only manages eighth. And after all the points are added up it's Fenwick and Jones who sit equal first on 66 although Tommy takes it on the tie-breaker rule! Crazy!

But if you think that's crazy what about those four-wheelin' masters of disasters – the hard charging quad blasters! Although Mark Watson wins every race he enters in the series – three out of three – the former sidecarcross GP passenger falls way short in the final tally as super-smooth Honda rider Giles Davis runs a solid 1-2-4-2 to easily tie up the title. Just edging out Watson to the runner-up spot is Yamaha pilot Oli Sansom whose 3-4-3-4 scorecard adds up to just one more point than the Northumberlander's three wins.



Schoolie sensation
Conrad Mewse
wins everything



The Auto class rip up
the Echo Arena track



INDOOR WAR!

THERE'S NO SHORTAGE OF ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS AT THE FINAL ROUND OF THE 2010 INDOOR ENDURO WORLD CUP AS KNIGHTER'S KTM RETURN ENDS WITH AN IMPRESSIVE RUNNER-UP RESULT – BUT IT'S TADDY BLAZUSIAK WHO NETS ANOTHER OVERALL WIN

Words and photos by Jonty Edmunds

With the 2010 Indoor Enduro World Cup title already his thanks to dominant performances at the opening three rounds of the series, Taddy Blazusiak makes it a clean sweep of overall event wins by topping the series-ending Barcelona Indoor Enduro.

With little left to prove the Polish KTM rider is fully aware that the Spanish event will likely be his toughest indoor challenge this winter – and it certainly is. With the strongest rider line-up of any round of the series Taddy's biggest challenge comes from his KTM team-mates Ivan Cervantes and David Knight.

And it's Knight who strikes first, ending Taddy's run of final wins as the Manxman keeps himself out of trouble to top the night's opening Main Event. With Taddy failing to get the jump from the start he's forced to work his way from the rear of the pack while home crowd favourite Ivan Cervantes leads the way.

But no sooner has Ivan settled into the lead he makes the first of a series of mistakes that eventually see him finish 10th – a long, long way behind the leaders. Seizing his chance to head the rush for the chequered flag Knighter puts his KTM out front and stays there. "I found a pace I was happy with and stuck to it," explains Knight. "I didn't really want to go for it and risk crashing. It's been a while since I last won an indoor race so it feels great to start the night like this."

Despite his poor start Blazusiak finishes up second having charged his way forward with style. Third – and producing

his best result of the championship – is Spain's Daniel Gibert.

The night's second final sees Taddy blast into an early lead which is where he remains for the full eight laps. Not putting a foot wrong, he finishes with his best result of the evening some 12 seconds up on Cervantes. Third goes to Knight who just like Taddy in the opening final suffers from a poor start.

"After the first race that win felt so much easier," comments Taddy. "It shows how important starts are. If you get stuck behind the wrong rider on the wrong part of the track there's nothing you can do except hope you don't stay there for too long."

With Knight and Blazusiak having both claimed a win apiece it's Cervantes who tops the third final ensuring KTM end the night having won all three Main Events. Leading from the start, Ivan's job is made easier by a mistake from Knight. Cartwheeling over the bars after carrying too much speed out of the water section, the burly Manxman comes close to collecting Blazusiak on his way down but the Pole manages to stay upright before starting to hunt down Cervantes.

With just four seconds separating the two riders at the end of the action-packed race the ecstatic crowd watch in delight as Ivan claims the chequered flag. Back in third, some 27 seconds adrift, Knight crosses the line having done enough to secure the runner-up position behind the new IEWC champion Blazusiak and ahead of former champ Cervantes.

Dougie's not had the best of seasons indoors and ends his night in Barcelona in A&E



DOUG'S LUCK SUCKS!

LAMPKIN LANDS IN HOSPITAL

Dougie Lampkin's luck has sucked during the 2010 IEWC series – far from firing on all cylinders at the Sheffield opener, Dougie was then forced to miss the third round in Vigo due to foot-up commitments and ends the final round in Barcelona with a trip to the hospital.

Thankfully, Dougie did manage an impressive showing at the second round of the series in Genoa. Placing 3-4-5 on the night secured fourth overall and helped Lampkin to eighth in the series' final point standings which, all things considered, isn't too bad.

"It's fair to say it's not been the best of championships," comments Doug. "Not feeling well for the first round in Sheffield was really disappointing and ending the final event in hospital certainly wasn't what I wanted. But I've had some good races, especially at Genoa. Things were going pretty well in Barcelona too until I got taken out by another rider."

Proving that he's as quick as any rider across the technical sections of the track, Dougie's steady pace sees him finish sixth in the first final and then fifth in the second – although ending up in hospital following his mid-race incident in final #3 certainly isn't how Dougie hoped the series would end.

iewc

He may lose his unbeaten record in Barcelona but Taddy still ends the series on top



BEST BRIT

GO, GO GRIMBO...

Britain's highest finisher in the 2010 IEWC series is Sherco's Graham Jarvis. Scoring points in all but one of the championship's 12 finals, Grimbo jumps up the indoor rankings to finish fourth behind Blazusiak, Cervantes and Ljunggren.

"I'm really pleased with fourth in the championship," admits Graham at the end of the Barcelona event. "The most important thing for me was to improve on my championship position in last year's series which I've done. Getting to ride the new 300cc Sherco has been great. I've had some great support which has made things a lot easier for me."

Like all northern European riders one thing that's not helped Graham is the weather. "I've not had a training bike like my race bike which hasn't helped and nor has the weather. There's not really been any option but to go from event to event and just do my best."

Finishing on the podium at the series opener in Sheffield, Grimbo's one and only no-score came in the opening final in Genoa, Italy. After scoring more championship points in all races in Vigo, Spain, Graham then ends the championship with mixed results in Barcelona.

"The first race took a lot out of me. I had a great start in my qualifying race but then I struggled to gate well in the finals. The first race wasn't good. I started at the back of the field and then fell a few times, got landed on and generally wasted lots of energy. I still managed to score points in all races and held onto fourth in the championship which was the main thing I wanted to do."

Graham Jarvis puts the Sherco in fourth overall after four rounds



IEWC

FINAL SERIES STANDINGS >>

1	Taddy Blazusiak	KTM	174 points
2	Ivan Cervantes	KTM	115
3	Joakim Ljunggren	Husaberg	95
4	Graham Jarvis	Sherco	70
5	Daniel Gibert	Yamaha	63
6	Mika Ahola	Honda	47
7	David Knight	KTM	43
8	Dougie Lampkin	Beta	43
9	Mike Brown	KTM	32
10	Antoine Meo	Husqvarna	27



FatCat main man
Martin Craven gets a
wild card ride

Knighter marks his return
to indoor action with KTM
with a race one win



DK'S RETURN

NICE FOR KNIGHT

Not being able to finish the opening round of the IEWC series back in November was a huge disappointment for David Knight, not least because it was his one and only chance to compete in front of home fans. With breathing difficulties forcing the Manxman out after just one race in Sheffield, at the final round of the series DK makes sure he doesn't disappoint.

With the event marking his return to KTM all eyes are on the former WEC and US GNCC champ. With no championship position to worry about David's simply focused on doing the best he can as he uses the event as 'training'. In topping the opening final David brings Blazusiak's unbeaten run of nine final victories to a halt as well as showing that after a tough '09 he's getting back to his best.

"I can't remember the last time I raced an indoor enduro and didn't have to worry about the championship," explains David. "After what happened at the opening round I wanted to show that I could still compete with the full-time and regular indoor riders and by winning the first final I think I did that."

"I'm really pleased with the way things went in Barcelona. Winning another WEC title is my focus this year so I knew I wasn't going to be as ready as I could have been as I've been doing all my training on the big four-stroke. It was a hard work out because there wasn't much time between each final but ending the night second overall is a solid start to the new season."



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RAGE

MIGHTY JOE!

THE DARK HORSE TAKING ON THE NATIONALS

DOUBLEWHAMMY!

XTREME ACADEMY AND YOUTH LEAGUE

BRING IT ON!

WHO'S WHO IN THE 'BIG FIVE' TITLE HUNTS



© Mike Gurney

Alex Walton's looked sharp so far this year on the 65

Ben Watson



Ben Howell's making a speedy recovery from his NEC SX injury



Albie Wilkie in BSMA action

BRING IT ON!

RAGE CHECKS OUT THE TOP TIPS FOR TITLES AS THE 'BIG FIVE' GET SET TO KICK OFF

With just a month to go before the first youth national points of the season are dished out at Foxhill and Mallory Park on the weekend of March 13/14 you can almost feel the tension and excitement rising.

The Red Bull EYC and KWS are the first of the major youth championships (add to these two the BYMX, BSMA and MXY2 crowns to complete the 'Big Five') to spring into action in what will surely be a full-throttle, high-energy weekend.

In Junior 65cc speak no-one is entering the 2010 season with more expectation than young Albie Wilkie. Albie impressed just about everyone last term with his rapid progress through the BSMA ranks and that has continued throughout the winter supercross season with a few eye-catching and crowd-pleasing performances.

Wherever Albie starts in 2010 he is my clear favourite to lift the 65cc crown – if it's the case that Albie tries to repeat the national treble success of Conrad Mewse last term it's definitely well within his grasp. The East Kent club certainly recognise his promise, recently commenting "first we had Tommy Searle, now we have Albie Wilkie". High praise indeed.

Elsewhere in this section, looking across the board at all competitions, both Jamie Osbourne and Alex Walton have been particularly strong in Wilden MXC winter competition and they look to be a formidable pair. Also from last year's ranks Ryan Vickers, Keenan Hird, Jake Edey, Taylor Hammal, Max Bickers and Bradley Malin will all be aiming for the heady heights of the podium steps in 2010.

Ben and James Harrison



Connor Walkley is a top tip for BYMX and MXY2 glory



Dan Thornhill is looking to recapture his best form in the KWS and BSMA

Jamie Osbourne



In the SW85cc sections across the nation it's a similar case to the 65s with one stand-out performer starting the season as white hot favourite to clean up. Ollie Osmaston has elected to go the extra year in a section where he performed at the highest level last term. This year Ollie has the extra punch that only the Honda 150F can provide on certain tracks – so the only question for me is who will finish second?

Ollie is such a clear favourite he could even eclipse Ben Watson's fantastic 91 per cent win ratio in 2009 that scored Ben 63 wins from 69 starts. The best winter SW performance I have seen personally came from Casey Connolly as he out-muscled Robert Yates in winter competition at Wilden Lane recently. Having said that, Robert got his revenge at Polesworth the following week and Robert is as good as anyone in the chase for ultimate glory. At the time of going to press Casey is only entered in the KWS series and he starts as clear favourite to lift the SW mini masters title.

Looking at the BYMX and Elite series, if Ollie slips up as he goes for a multi-title winning season there are plenty of fast lads waiting in the wings. In no particular order you've got Robert Yates, Jack Seabourne, Jay Lamb, Jack Camwell, Conrad Mewse, Sid Evans, Josh Gilbert, Lewis Houghton, Gregg Hyett, Henry Williams, Ben Harrison, Sam Braithwaite, Danny Lanfear, Jack Wilson, Jamie Carpenter, Jake Deacon and David Keet.

As you can see the list of possible candidates for a podium finish is quite extensive with, I'm sure, yet more guys still to show...

The battle between Ben Howell and Ben Watson always looked as if it would be the highlight of the 2010 BW season and with Ben Howell now recovering faster than expected following his NEC SX accident the fight appears to be fully back on the agenda. Ben Howell is the stronger and the older of the duo but you wouldn't ever bet against young Ben Watson bringing home the silverware yet again.

Having said that it seems year after year someone always rips up the form book and roars out of the shadows to stake a championship claim. In recent years no-one really saw Richie Worrall (2007), Brad Pocock (2008) or Nathan Watson (2009) as being the main threat to the eventual title winners. Will there be a similar challenge in 2010? Well if there is to be one whoever it is will have a long list of top talent to work their way through and around before they get to the really fancied runners.

Liam Garland looked likely to be the main challenger to both Watson and Howell but his recent supercross accident at the Liverpool round has wiped him out for the national season with torn muscles. Connor Clarke, Micky Eccles and Robert Davidson are a formidable trio – and they now represent the next wave of the challenge.

On the next step down looking across all competitions, KWS and BSMA included, any one of the following could be a potential title challenger too – Jay Thomas, Sam Winterburn, Liam Knight, Tom Neal, Corie Southwood, Jack Kelly, Adam Sterry, James Harrison, Rickie Roderick, Brad Todd, Sam Wragg

and Chubby Hammond.

The various youth Open sections – on paper – look the easier to predict. Flying 15-year-old Connor Walkley starts as my favourite for the BYMX and MX2 championships. Nathan Watson, Bradley Pocock and Jamie McCanney are the same age and they together with 14-year-old Ryan Houghton are my choice to be headline makers in BYMX action. They won't have it all their own way though with the likes of Damon Wales, James Dunn, Jordan Godwin, Jake Page, Luke Norris and sand specialist Gary Sharp in the ACU line-up. Gary Sharp especially could be one to spring an early season surprise on home ground in his favourite Leuchars sand.

In the Red Bull Rookie class there is an equally formidable line-up at the sharp end with Nathan Watson, Sunny Thompson, Jamie McCanney and Bradley Pocock taking on riders of the calibre of Lewis Trickett and Jake Shipton. Then there's the presence of rising young talent in the shape of Matty Fleming, Robbie Muscat, Aaron Pipon, Jordan Dival, Jordan Godwin, Bradley Banks and Kelvin Townsend to consider – the Red Bull Rookies races will be bar-to-bar entertainment all the way down the card.

MYSTICMIKE

RAGE'S RANDOM PREDICTIONS

Albie Wilkie to end the year as the top Junior 65cc runner

Connor Walkley to be ACU BYMX or MX2 champion

Ollie Osmaston to break his duck and win two national titles in devastating fashion

Damon Wales, Dean Hakes and James Dunn to dominate in KWS MX2

Casey Connolly to be the best in KWS SW minis

Dan Thornhill to be BSMA 125cc two-stroke champion.

Jay Thomas or Sam Winterburn to lift the KWS BW crown

Ryan Houghton to make the transition from youth star to top adult prospect

Ben Watson to be the best percentage BW runner in 2010

Joe Jones to ruffle a few feathers in the ACU MX2 ranks

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DOUBLEWHAMMY!

XTREME ACADEMY AND YOUTH LEAGUE LAUNCHES

The Honda Xtreme Academy and the Red Bull Youth League are both new for 2010. Launched at the back end of 2009, both have now broken cover with a few more details.

Honda Xtreme Academy points will be awarded to Honda 150F riders aged from 11 to 15 who race in the Express Insurance BYMX BW85cc class. Separate points will be allocated to the Honda runners which at the end of the season could mean prizes and also the possibility of winning an invitation to a John van den Berk training school in Spain.

For all the rules, regulations and the complete lowdown on the new Honda deal take a look at the official Honda Xtreme site – www.hondaracing-eu.com/xtreme – or contact Sonia Goggin at the ACU on **01788 566404**.

The Red Bull Youth League will be in essence very similar to the BSMA system of qualifiers leading to an end-of-season grand finale. The qualifiers will be run by MCF-affiliated clubs with the grand finale event being run by the Red Bull Pro Nationals team.

One organiser who has signed up big time to the MCF cause for 2010 is Mark Arnold at MX27. Mark has also given his personal backing to a new MX27 Throttlespec race team. With an average age under nine the team's young but the guys are well up for the challenge all the way from Auto through to Big Wheels. The full team will be six-year-old duo Robbie Scott and Harvey Matthews along with the Edwards brothers. The Edwards warriors are eight-year-old Dylan, nine-year-old Marcus and 12-year-old Connor.

Mark will be running his Red Bull Youth League races as part of his Golden Tyre summer championship event. He's been meticulous in his planning of the summer championship and RB league races and already has a few spectacular national courses including Wilden Lane, Mepal, FatCat and the full Mallory Park circuit as confirmed venues. You can access a full set of Red Bull Youth League rules as well as news on the Golden Tyre championship on Mark's MX27 site at www.27mxracers.co.uk

Oh brother! Dylan, Marcus and Connor Edwards



Keep your eyes peeled for Joe Jones in his first season of youth nationals



MIGHTY JOE!

ONE TO WATCH FOR 2010...

Taking a glance down the lists of runners for the various youth national competitions one name caught my eye more than any other – and in 2010 take a tip from me and keep your eyes firmly fixed on this kid too. He's fast-gating, smooth-riding and hard-charging if he needs to be and for me he represents the main challenge along with Bradley Pocock to Connor Walkley in this year's Maxxis MX2 competition.

Joe Jones is a 16-year-old multi-championship winning enduro specialist and something of a local hero in the West Midlands with his domination at winter MX events at Wilden Lane and Polesworth.

Without doubt over this current winter season Joe has been by far the best performer in his age group yet again. Two-stroke specialist Joe gives the youth ranks a miss and goes directly to the high-end MX2 or Open class races to test his mettle at winter club level.

Over the winter months with overall and individual race wins claimed against the likes of Josh Waterman and Josh Spinks, Joe has shown he could be a major force

at the very top of the youth MX ranks.

Joe has underlined the point at club level for the last couple of seasons and now he intends to test his potential at national level as he enters this year's ACU MX2 four-round competition.

Joe has never competed in youth nationals before and the plan for 2010 is to concentrate as usual on his enduro commitments. However, with assistance from Dave Hobday at Thottlespec Racing based at Solihull near Birmingham, the MX2 series will be a new and exciting sideline for all concerned. Joe's plan is to start the competition on his 150cc KTM stroker and see how things pan out – if an 'F' machine is needed to stay on the pace it's an option.

One thing's for sure, whatever way he travels Joe will provide an extra dimension to the youth ranks in 2010 with his natural flair and ability – and he just might end the season with a bigger dilemma than he started it. Motocross or enduro for the long-term future?

You can catch up with Joe via his website www.joejonesmx.co.uk

GOT A STORY FOR RAGE?

Then contact our Youth Editor Mike Gurney at mikegurney55@yahoo.co.uk

BIKES, BALLS

BILLY'S BACK IN THE SADDLE AND WHEN HE'S NOT TURNING LAPS HE CAN BE FOUND FOULING FAT KIDS AND ADMIRING THE ODD COCKATOO...

Words and photos by Billy MacKenzie

Well it's been all go since New Year. My bike arrived at the end of the first week in January and since then I've put 16 hours of pure moto on the little engine timer thing!

I started off doing three 15-minute motos just stood up and flowing and now I'm up to the usual two 40s at a decent race pace. And there was one day when I put three hard 30-minute motos in on a scorching hot day. So it's been a tough month and my hands are showing from it but I feel so good on the bike now, I've got that feeling back when I ride which I didn't have much last year. It seems like every time I ride now I have a 'good day'.

The bike is unreal. I'm still just running a stock bike with a Pro Circuit pipe but the thing is lovely! The Kawasaki has that really nice torquey power that I like, it's so easy to ride and really stable and balanced. I have gelled with the bike a lot better than I did with the new Honda – because the bike has been around a few years now it's a proven good bike and that was the one thing that made me wanna ride a Kawasaki this year.

I tested my Pro Circuit suspension this week, some nice A kit Showas all set up and ready to be bolted in and ridden! I spent a whole day testing that and a few different parts so just a few more things to test before I finalise my

set-up and start doing my sprint motos on a bike that is fully dialled for race speed.

Our team has a massive new workshop which is impressive, big enough to park the trailer in! Kawasaki are really going to town this year with both of the Aussie Kawasaki teams joining together to become the full factory team. I really did land myself a sweet deal. Everyone is really cool and have been super helpful. We are getting direct support from Pro Circuit which I'm excited about and I can't wait to try the engine parts because the bike is already awesome.

I have my first race this weekend at a place called Coolum. It's like a little mini series, kinda like the KWS Masters, so we're gonna use these races to get set up and have some race time before the nationals start. I feel like I'm riding good at the moment but we'll see at the race I suppose! I've heard there are some decent riders gonna be there – the factory Honda team riders will be riding so this will be the first time I see everyone's speed and how the races work. It all seems pretty cool though – imagine a British round in the gorgeous sunshine where everyone gets along and has BBQs together! Well that's what I'm hoping for and from what people tell me that's how it is so I can't wait!

I've managed to find myself a little wolf pack over here to hang around with, bunch of cool guys from Toowoomba that all have bikes and

are a good bunch to know. They play five-a-side indoor football on Wednesdays, just like I used to do back home in Scotland with Bry and Stevie. So I've managed to bring my footy skills into good use over here – although they play it like a tournament, not just like the mental hacking match that I'm used to. We play other teams each week and eventually there is an overall winner so it's not like you know who you're playing and what you can get away with.

The matches still get pretty heated sometimes. I still can't work it all out completely – our team is strong and we win most times but only by a goal or two. We have some big lads playing on our team but no-one is really what I would call aggressive. I mean, there are moments when a one-on-one tackle is won with force but it's hard to work out who are the nutters on the opposing team and who aren't – do you understand what I'm saying? Like at home, we all have a pretty good picture of the trouble makers – the way they speak, the way they walk, the clothes they wear. Basically neds! But over here it's hard to tell just because I haven't been brought up around it all. I don't know the accents or the swaggers, I don't know what the basic trouble makers' habits are. Which I reckon is gonna get me into trouble one day!

I had a bit of a run in with this fat lad on the other team at one of our matches. It was a





typical short man syndrome team, they all seemed quite young and were always having sly little digs at us pushing them around. But in fact it was the opposite, they all had a bee under their bonnets because they were small so were putting in the hardest tackles they could. They had one fat lad on their team who must be the 'hard' one of their crew and thought he could throw a big running shoulder barge into me as we were both going for the ball. He pushed me off it hard and I got upset because it was clearly a foul!

I bounced off the nets and gave him a big push from behind to square up and have a word. We had a bit of a face off, he gave it a big "what?" and I said "don't start that s**t!" so we had made the problem official and now it was down to who could cut the best moves on the pitch. I caught him a beauty one time – kinda accidental but on purpose – and he must have tripped over his own feet and landed square on his back. So I gave it the big stand over while he was on the floor with my chest out! It was very alpha male of me and he backed down after that. Funny times!

Did I mention I live on MacKenzie Street? Honest! There's also a Ramsey Street actually parallel to MacKenzie Street. Neighbours and Home and Away are on quite regularly over here too. Remember back in the day when those were the only soaps on TV? Well, maybe

they were the only ones I watched. I've never watched Emmerdale or Eastenders or any other British soap for that matter. It's no wonder I ended up over here, I used to watch Neighbours when Natalie Imbruglia was on it playing Beth although I always used to fancy the girl called Lucy in it.

There's a big tree right outside my bedroom and every morning without fail I awake to the sound of these screeching cockatiels! Like a gang of them. They do laps over the houses and have fights with the crows! It's really funny to watch – I can just imagine what they're thinking and sometimes I even sit in my garden and do voiceovers for them in my head. I amuse myself in strange ways! The crows seem like they're the brute force bullies – there were only three crows and about 17 cockatiels and, for the record, I am fully on the cockatiels side even if they are f**king noisy. They look cool, they are all white with yellow mohicans and they seem to have first rights on this tree.

So when the crows invaded their territory there was a big scuffle. There were three crows all on one branch and the cockatiels were on the opposite tree obviously thinking to themselves 'who are these rev heads on our tree?' – it was a bold attempt by the crows but really they were outnumbered big time which begs the obvious question, what was the point? Just trouble making! Anyway, the

cockatiels must have sent their leader to go see what the deal was – I'm guessing it was their leader as it was such a clear breach of branch. I wouldn't wanna go face off three dudes sitting in my garden on my own but this cockatiel had back up.

He landed on the branch which was pretty brave and was immediately attacked! He had to drop down a branch so clearly talking about it wasn't going to work! He tried again but the crows were being real nasty so the rest of the cockatiel gang joined in and the crows were soon being bullied from all sides and split up. A very smart tactic by the cockatiels I thought! There was lots of screeching and cawing but no real physical attempts to remove the intruders. Eventually the crows got the message and had to vacate the premises – it was a glorious victory for the cockatiels!

Another event I found fun was Australia Day! Yes, they have a day dedicated to Australia over here and it was rather good fun! It's a holiday and everyone kinda loses the plot for 24 hours! Pretty much a big day to celebrate the country by drinking! Harriet and I were invited round to a lad called Brian's house with the rest of the indoor footy team and wags. I ended up playing my first ever game of cricket – better fun played than watched I may add.

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